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HISTORY  
AND  
DESCRIPTION  
OF  
ITALIAN  
MAJOLICA

M. L. SOLON






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A  
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OF  
ITALIAN MAJOLICA



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HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

OF

# ITALIAN MAJOLICA

BY

M. L. SOLON

WITH A PREFACE BY WILLIAM BURTON, F.C.S.

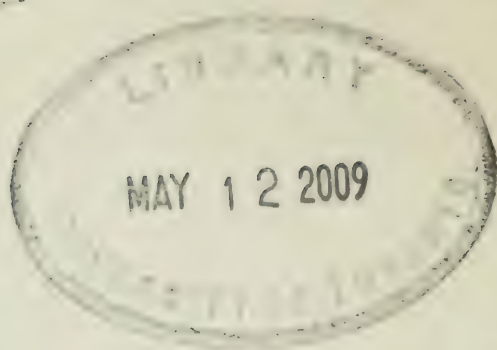
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## PREFACE

I CONSIDER myself fortunate in being able to include in this series of histories of the great schools of pottery a volume on Italian Majolica from the pen of my distinguished friend M. L. Solon. The subject is worthy of the noblest treatment, for, in its sphere, the decorated pottery of the Italian Renaissance is as supreme as the contemporary architecture, painting, and sculpture; and no one who has any pretensions to a knowledge of pottery can fail to realise the eminent qualifications Mr. Solon possesses for such a task.

Foreign critics have sometimes, perhaps unkindly, said that "England is the grave of all the arts." Certainly we have been great as collectors of the work of bygone centuries, and as each art or craft, travelling westward, has reached its bourn on the fringe of the Atlantic, we have striven as craftsmen and as artists to learn from the work of our predecessors. England has long been rich in its treasures of Italian pottery, held both by private collectors and by the State, and if we cannot point to any distinctive pottery of our own which has been born out of the ashes of Italian Majolica, as the old painted faïence of France was, at least English collectors and connoisseurs have contributed their fair share to the considerable literature that has been written about these glorious works of the past. Too much credit can hardly be given to the authorities of the South Kensington Museum for their enterprise in providing excellent yet inexpensive handbooks on many branches of art-workmanship, and among the numerous volumes issued by the Museum, that on "Italian Majolica," by the late Mr. Drury E. Fortnum, is worthy of all praise as the first really competent account of the subject, in any

language, which was at the same time within the reach of the poorest student. Mr. Drury Fortnum followed up this little handbook by larger and more sumptuously illustrated volumes, culminating in his great work on "Majolica," published in 1896. Since that time Mr. Henry Wallis, unrivalled in his artistic interpretation of ancient pottery, has issued a number of valuable and suggestive monographs on various phases of the art of the mediæval Italian potter. While these works have made their appearance in this country, and our national collections have slowly grown richer, scholars have been busy, in Italy, France, and Germany extending our knowledge of the origin and development of the painted pottery of the Italian Renaissance. Some have been content to rearrange previously-garnered knowledge in the light of modern scholarship and research. Others have ransacked the archives of old Italian towns and states, or the records of the princely families of that country, for any documents that might throw light on old-time things and men: in this connection the work of Mr. Langton Douglas, in deciphering and arranging the archives of Siena, is worthy of special mention, as it is the fruit of English scholarship. Finally, the spade of the excavator has been turned to account in this field almost as fruitfully as in the domain of classical archæology, and the collections of fragments disinterred from the site of the old potteries of the peninsula have brought both enlightenment and confusion in their train, because their worth has been too often misinterpreted and their exact significance misunderstood.

Unfortunately, the majority of the workers in this wide field seem to have been infected with a little of that patriotic fever that claims every Italian writer for its own. Let a writer, however judicial he may be in other matters, commence to write of Faenza, Diruta, or Siena, and he immediately loses all perspective, and we find him no longer content to tell us what was done at one of these places, but before long he is off at a canter trying to persuade us that *his* particular centre was the very *fons et origo* of all Italian Majolica.



To weigh calmly and appraise fairly all these varied contributions to our knowledge is not every man's task—to begin with, it demands skill in the tongues of men possessed by few—but Mr. Solon brings to its essay the ripe experience of a life, already longer than the psalmist's span, spent in the study of the history of pottery in its larger aspects, and, above all, that intimate knowledge of technique gained by half a century's work as a ceramic artist, executing with his own hand the visions of his fancy. What power of divination is bestowed by this patient yet inspired toil in clay only another craftsman can appreciate in full, but those who are no craftsmen may certainly realise. At all events, the reader of Mr. Solon's pages may be assured that they present a new account of the origin of the painted and lustred tin-enamelled wares of Italy, drawn from all the latest sources of information by an unrivalled hand.

WILLIAM BURTON.

*October, 1907.*





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# ITALIAN MAJOLICA

## INTRODUCTION

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AT last, fully alive to the sense of her recuperative powers, Italy awoke, towards the beginning of the fifteenth century, from a long spell of collapse and torpor, bravely inaugurating a glorious era of gigantic efforts which were to be rewarded by ever-increasing prosperity. Commanding figures were daily emerging from the crowd, taking at once their place at the front. To the great and mighty of the hour, a lavish display of wealth and luxury had become an imperious necessity. An intense hankering for all that could attract and rivet the gaze was prevalent among the educated class, then plunging headlong into the intellectual and sensual enjoyment to be derived from a contemplation of the steady



advance of the plastic arts. This alone may be taken as accounting for the production and the immediate success of the brilliant and picturesque majolica of Italy. Following in the train of all handicrafts of the higher order—when they enlist the assistance of science and art to transform simple traditional methods into the mysteries of complicated technical achievements—the national pottery assumed quite a new face. The pot-maker became something of a scientist and of an artist. Suddenly, behold! the ignoble earthen jar is turned into an elegant and precious vessel. The vase is still formed of vile earth, but its surface, covered with a shining white enamel, is painted in brilliant colours with delicate devices. As a rose-water ewer or a sweetmeat dish the majolica piece is admitted into the castle and the palace, and there stands creditably by the side of the cabinet of cedar-wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the brocaded silk hangings, the Eastern carpets, the golden plate, and its other gorgeous environments. The majolist himself—for the humble artisan of the pot-work had assumed this more dignified name—has become a man of mark. He is invited to Court, and is treated by his noble patron with distinct favour. Princes contend with one another to secure his exclusive service or to obtain the finest work that his hand can produce. Even to our own day the royal treasuries of Europe preserve some remarkable examples of ancient majolica once sent, as presents of priceless value, by some reigning prince of Italy to a friendly monarch.

This minor branch of the sumptuary arts of a highly refined nation, in the very existence of which magnificence and pomp had played such an inherent part, could not fail to find in the country of its birth many a devoted historian. There is, indeed, no lack of written or printed documents left by the chroniclers of the past to assist the modern investigator in his endeavour to determine the origin and trace the successive phases of the glorification and decline of Italian majolica. Nor are excellent representatives of its art and manufacture at all periods wanting in our museums. Curiously enough, it is in this very superabundance of

materials that we find the stumbling-block which impedes the safe progress of our study.

As a rule, researches were conducted, in the past, on divergent and often restricted lines. One group of writers has limited its labours to ransacking public archives in search of fresh and illuminative texts, neglecting to prosecute a simultaneous examination of the productions of the old craft. Others have devoted all their attention to the marks, and to the typical features distinguishing the ware of various centres; ranging the whole of it into somewhat arbitrary classes, heedless of the corroborative importance of existing documents. Thus, many a groundless statement, originally allowed to pass unchallenged, has been so repeatedly put into print that it has now become an article of faith to the unwary. In the same way we have come to accept as fully authenticated certain doubtful marks of which nothing definite has ever sanctioned some merely hypothetical ascription.

It is only in later times that the necessity for instituting a well-considered survey of the whole question has been deemed indispensable. To that effect, a few impartial and sagacious spirits undertook to confront, together, the conflicting opinions previously arrived at from prejudiced or one-sided considerations. Sedulously winnowing the chaff from the wheat, they have succeeded in placing our knowledge of Italian majolica upon a sound and rational basis.

To an Italian antiquary we owe the publication of the first monograph ever devoted to one special centre of ceramic manufacture. In 1752, J. B. Passeri indited, as a relaxation from his heavy classical and geological researches, a history of the majolica made at Pesaro and other places of that district. A noted citizen of Pesaro, a staunch collector of her local productions, Passeri laboured under a blind infatuation for all that redounded to the glory of his town. Misled by dated fragments of pottery—found in the soil of the city, but which were undoubtedly chance importations from distant centres of manufacture—and depending on the strength of illusory arguments, Passeri had no hesitation in attributing



to the craftsmen of Pesaro the very invention of painting on stanniferous enamel, the discovery of the metallic lustres, and the introduction of sundry styles and processes, now known to have originated elsewhere. Better would it have been if the book had never been published. Its influence on subsequent writers has been simply disastrous. All the most regrettable errors that mar many an otherwise conscientious work, treating of Italian majolica, emanate from this inexhaustible source of mis-statements.

Over a century elapsed before any further attempt was made to gather together the still-current popular traditions which related to the old majolist and his work. Antiquarian circles were then immersed in the contemplation and elucidation of the mysterious subjects painted on the Greek vases, just exhumed in prodigious quantities from the necropolises of Etruria and Magna Grecia. Such erudite occupation left to those passionately engaged in such pursuits neither time nor inclination to interest themselves in ceramic works of a totally different order. Nevertheless, as the old-fashioned majolica, in the form of large tazzas, cooling cisterns, fruit stands, dishes of unusual dimensions, etc., richly ornamented with figures and intricate ornaments, had always been held to be of great account, its remains still shone in the halls and galleries of the great as relics of a lost art and examples of a bygone taste. Owing to the boldness of the treatment, the paintings of this gorgeous ware were not without a sort of relationship with the work of the great masters of the Renaissance. On that account discussions were occasionally raised among dilettanti as to whether certain exceptional specimens had not been painted by Raffaello's own hand. The possibility implied by such an allegation had met with so little protest that we find Joseph Marryat, usually so cautious in his assertions, scarcely daring to discard the term altogether, and referring to Italian majolica under the name of Raffaello ware.

An idea of the state in which this particular branch of knowledge stood about sixty years ago may be gathered from the notices inserted in the general histories of the ceramic

art which began to be published at that period. Little, indeed, could be learned from their contents, and this little had soon to be unlearned, when more reliable information finally came to hand.

Quite a sensation was created, in 1857, by the printing of a MS. just acquired by the South Kensington Museum. It was an original treatise on the manufacture of majolica, written, in 1550, by Cipriano Piccolpasso, a master potter of Castel Durante, under the title of "*I TRE LIBRI DELL' ARTE DEL VASAJO.*" The sketches with which the text is accompanied give a faithful representation of the machines, tools, and ovens in use at that epoch. It was expected that all the ways and means of manufacture peculiar to the Italian potter would be faithfully described by the writer. Such expectations were only to be partially realised. Piccolpasso warns his readers that he is debarred from disclosing the trade secrets he had himself practised, when established at Castel Durante, lest he should be accused of having turned traitor to his old mates and fellow-townsmen. Consequently he remains silent as to what relates to the factories of his good town, the names of the potters, and the kind of ware they manufactured. But he feels at liberty to communicate to us all the processes and recipes the knowledge of which he had acquired in the workshops of Urbino and other centres. It may be seen that the whole treatise rests, after all, on second-hand information, and the study of it shows that it has more archæological than technical value. The manufacture of the ancient majolica could scarcely be reconstructed with its sole assistance; an experienced faïence maker will find nothing in it that he has not known long ago. As to the shapes of the tools and the plans of the kilns, they are in truth far too primitive to be of any use now. Moreover, the edition of the MS. of Piccolpasso published at Rome in 1857 is far from accurate. It was printed from a copy made by the possessor of the original before he had parted with it. The old Italian text had been inconsiderately modernised, and a chapter treating of the metallic lustres completely omitted.



One page of supplement to that edition, containing the missing chapter, was issued a few years afterwards, but it is to be found in very few copies. The translation in old French, given by C. Popelin, follows all the errors of the Roman edition, and cannot be recommended.

From the few catalogues of notable collections of majolica printed in Italy during the first half of the nineteenth century we may realise the state of absolute indifference in which the earnest *conoscenti* stood with regard to the identification of the respective productions of extinct factories of which little was known beyond the name. In these early catalogues all specimens are described according to the subject represented on them; no consideration is given to the marks, and no suggestion is ever made as to the possible locality of origin.

It would not be fair to omit any mention of the few essays on local manufacture published, a little later, by Raffaelli for Castel Durante, Bonghi for Castelli, Torteroli for Savona, and a few other minor monographists. However valuable the fruits of these isolated researches undoubtedly are in themselves, and especially for the assistance they gave to later compilers, one has to beware of the intense partiality each writer could not help displaying in treating a subject so dear to his own heart.

In the catalogue of the Correr Museum, Venice, 1859, we find the first successful attempt at presenting a well-digested outline of the general history of the art, together with short notices of factories so far neglected by the historian. The curator, V. Lazari, had sedulously and sagaciously gathered, scrutinised, and tested the value of a large amount of scattered material and information, and he had thus been enabled to classify, with unprecedented correctness, the larger part of the remarkable collection of majolica entrusted to his care. Groups had been formed of specimens which a similarity of style and a common mark indicated as having definite relationship. In most cases the exact place of manufacture was either defined or suggested. No other museum, I believe, could at that time boast of such a rational and instructive



arrangement of its majolica section. This catalogue is still authoritative on all the points touched by the author. In France, A. Darcel, then assistant curator at the Louvre Museum, followed, in the preparation of the "*Catalogue des Faïences peintes*; Paris, 1864," the plan adopted by Lazari. I need not point out that the field of preliminary studies had to be considerably enlarged, that many points had to be inquired into which had not been approached before, and that an acceptable solution was sought for, to answer the many problems incessantly raised when one has to deal with a collection of such magnitude and variety as that preserved in the Louvre. All this Darcel accomplished with great credit to himself and to the benefit of the collecting world at large. This catalogue and the historical notices with which it is provided are still valued as forming a comprehensive and reliable text-book. Baron Ch. Davillier and E. Molinier have shown themselves the worthy successors of Darcel.

In England, J. C. Robinson, Drake, and later on Henry Wallis, have efficiently contributed to an international exchange of materials towards the building up of a final history of Italian majolica. E. Drury Fortnum, himself a fervent collector of the ware, occupies a special place among English writers. Entering the field in 1868 with a paper on the Bacini or earthenware discs embedded in the walls of the old churches of Italy, Drury Fortnum, ever faithful to the pursuit of his favourite study, crowned a long career of impartial and judicious investigations by the publication in 1898 of a most commendable volume entitled "*Majolica*." In its pages a clear summary of our present knowledge of the subject has been compendiously compressed. Under the same heading can now be ranged a multitude of books that are not all to be consulted with an equal measure of confidence. Some of them should decidedly be discarded as pernicious. Is it necessary for me to mention from among those of this order the fallacious yet once valued writings of A. Demmin, and to deprecate the sensational and extravagant theories of a prolific author who has misled more credulous students

than all the crowd of untrustworthy writers put together? No; public common sense has long since made short work of his preposterous fabrications; they are now forgotten as they deserve. Even at the present day we are not safe from the danger created by some self-deluded spirits who, in the face of the clearest rebutting evidence, will publish costly volumes in support of some untenable opinion. Let us take as a case in point the printed matter lately issued on the question as to whether the Cafaggiolo factory ever existed. To hear the partisans of the notion that all the ware attributed to that place should be assigned to Faenza expose their arguments with so much assurance may deceive a credulous spirit, but any impartial man reviewing the pros and cons of their trumped-up case is bound to come to the conclusion that the race of the Passeris is not altogether extinct.

Here a few words on the nature and manufacture of majolica will not be found out of place. The Italian ware known under that name, and its congeners the old faïences of Europe, differ in their technical aspect from common pottery by the thin coating of opaque, and generally white, enamel which protects the surface. Alkalies and oxide of lead formed the basis of the vitreous glaze with which porous earthen vessels were rendered impenetrable to liquids, one might say, in all countries and from remote antiquity. What ornamental lead-glazed pottery was made in Passeri's time was by him called *mezza-majolica*—quite an inappropriate term, if we take it in its present acceptation. The process consisted in coating the dark and coarse clay of which the piece was formed with a thin layer of fine white earth. On this ground the intended design was sometimes rudely painted, but more usually scratched in with the point of an iron tool, being ultimately stained over, in patches, with metallic colours. After the firing, the white ground had acquired a warm yellow tint, owing to the impurity of the lead ore with which it had been glazed. In short, it was neither a half-majolica ware nor, indeed, majolica at all—especially if we bear in mind the



statement of Piccolpasso that only such vessels as were decorated with metallic *reflets* were to be called majolica. The terms Graffito, or Sgraffiato, also used in reference to this "scratched" ware, are more correctly descriptive of the process.

A glaze of a very different nature was obtained from a combination of tin ashes and sundry fusible substances; a true enamel in its constitution, it was opaque and highly glossy. The high price of tin—a metal dearer than gold in olden times—had long stood against the vulgarisation of stanniferous enamel. It was, nevertheless, early adopted by the Italian potters of the Renaissance as the only artificial compound which could supply a pure and shiny white ground allowing a brilliant display of vitrifiable colours; qualities that they could not obtain by the use of natural clays.

Most suitable for the making of this new kind of pottery was the common marl, or calcareous clay, existing all over the country; it is found to be of particular excellence in the regions where the old pot-works were once established. Its only disadvantage was the drab or reddish colour it developed in the firing, but the use of an opaque enamel rendered that defect quite immaterial. It was of paramount importance to the intending manufacturer that he should select a spot where an inexhaustible supply of a well-tried clay could be depended upon. Although the same fundamental substances, viz. alumina, silica, carbonate of lime, and chloride of sodium, enter invariably into the composition of the marl, their respective proportions may, as is well known, vary considerably. When all the processes of manufacture have been adjusted to agree with the clay which forms the basis of all the potter's calculations, a change in the nature of this raw material may have a most detrimental effect on the quality of the ware. It does not appear, however, that with the old majolica maker any care was taken in what we should now call the composition of the "body." After it had been duly manipulated and purged of all extraneous matter, the clay was used in its natural state.

Remarkably simple and accurate is the description of the



rudimentary processes of contemporary manufacture given by V. Biringuccio in his treatise "*La Pyrotechnia*," printed at Venice in 1540. I cannot do better than present a translation of that portion of his work which refers to the subject, and which has never, so far as I know, been reproduced.

"Chapter 14.—DISCOURSE ON THE METHODS TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE ART OF MAKING POTS, WITH MANY OF THE SECRETS PERTAINING TO IT.

"Having commenced to tell you about the use of the potter's clay when treating of the making of crucibles and capsules, this puts me in mind to teach you all that concerns the fictile art, albeit this may, at first sight, seem to exceed the limits of my book. On further consideration, it will be seen that the subject has as much claim to be introduced in it as that of any other art which depends on the power and chances of the fire. Metals and other natural substances purified by the fire compose the glazes and colours; on these materials I intend to discourse. It is good, then, that I should say a few words about a handicraft of daily necessity, in so much as it is highly praised for its mysteries and beauty. It is derived from two main sources, namely, the art of design and the science of alchemy. I find, moreover, that it is governed by the following principles: firstly, the exertion of sound judgment in all eventualities; secondly, the display of artistic talent so that the ware should be elegant and decorated with fine paintings; thirdly, a great experience in the conduct of the fire, the knowledge of covering the goods with a glaze when they are baked for the second time, and of making the necessary colours; fourthly, and lastly, the certainty of having at hand a constant supply of reliable clay free from pebbles or nodules—a rule which should go before all others. The proper clay is called '*cretta*,' or argillaceous earth. A good mine of it having been secured, the clay is extracted, according to requirements, and is put to soak under water. Before it is used by the potter it is spread upon a board, beaten with an iron rod, duly manipulated and cleared of all the impurities that it may contain. Then a simple

machine must be constructed, formed of a broad wheel kept in balance at the inferior part of an iron stem which bears a small wooden disc at the other extremity. The operative having set the wheel to revolve with his foot, places a lump of clay on the head of the machine, and throws, turns, and fashions the plastic substance into all sorts of vases and vessels. When properly finished the articles are put aside, ultimately to receive such particular treatment as they shall require, according to the kind of ware it is intended to make; that is to say, red, white, yellow, or painted in various colours. If they are to be plain red pots, nothing more is wanted than to fire them, after they have been thoroughly dried. But if they are elegant vases destined to be painted and made beautiful, before they are quite dry they are to be coated over with a thin layer of white clay. The firing takes place in a square kiln three ells broad, half this size deep, and five ells high; it is covered with a flat vault. Below the level of the ground a well has been sunk about three ells wide and one-third deep. Just above it are the projecting fireplaces and the firing chamber. On the floor of it, where the goods are to be disposed, small arches shall be constructed, curved like a vault. At the top and sides of the structure outlets are provided, four on each side, for the issue of the flames and smoke. Through the thickness of the walls the flames must be directed in such a way that they will strike the top of the vault and reverberate upon the goods set in the kiln. The ware should be closely arranged, each row or pile supporting the other; yet care must be taken that sufficient space should be left between the piles to allow a free circulation of the flames and to guard against glazed and painted vases touching and sticking together. At the moment when the ware begins to soften under the force of the fire, and in order that all should not come to grief, the front opening should be walled up with bricks and clay, the four openings at the top covered with tiles, two peep-holes being left on each side to watch the march of the fire. The smoke escapes through the inferior apertures of the fire-mouth. If the



goods are of superior quality a twelve hours' firing is given with brushwood and other well-dried branches. If the goods are of a cheap kind the firing should not last more than is absolutely necessary. At the start the fire should be moderate, then its intensity is gradually increased, but not to such a degree as might be detrimental to the ware. It is only after the first four hours that one begins to augment the fire, and one continues to do so until it is estimated that the glaze and colours have been brought to the right point; it has then to be stopped and the kiln left to cool.

"The white, referred to higher up as a surface covering for the vases to be completed with a painted decoration, is made of a natural clay which, after it has been properly levigated and tempered with water, is taken as the basis of a fusible compound called marzacotto. This is made by adding to the white clay a certain quantity of the sand used by the glass maker, and of alum, or of tartar of wine. The proportions are one part of tartar and three parts of sand. This mixture is placed in a well-covered pot and calcined in the kiln under the fire; there it acquires the hardness of stone. One hundred pounds of lead and twenty pounds of tin are separately melted in a reverberatory kiln. One part of this last 'calcine' and two of marzacotto are pounded in a mortar and reduced to fine powder. This is the recipe of the white enamel. Thrown into a large cauldron of water, in which it is briskly stirred up, the enamel can next be poured over the pieces that are to be glazed, by means of a spoon or a small cup; the fusion will give to it a smooth and shiny surface, on which all kinds of painting may be executed. One must recollect that the white will be more beautiful in proportion to the percentage of tin; and, failing this, of calcined lead. Undoubtedly the greater or less brilliancy of the colours depends on the nature of the clay, but the painted treatment, which may be either too light or too heavy, is also answerable for the final result. Of supreme importance, however, is the conduct of the firing; unfortunately success does not rest altogether on the experience of the one who fires, but is contingent on the absence



of certain uncontrollable casualties. Often, heartbroken by the failure of a firing for which all recognised rules had been faithfully observed, the master is reduced to acknowledge that heavenly influence governs the fate of pottery as well as the fortunes of man."

The plain honesty of Biringuccio's much abridged but absolutely accurate treatise contrasts singularly with the cabalistic character of the turgid books of recipes indited by the alchemists of the period. To the practical rules of manufacture exposed in the chapter I have just given in full must be added the valuable information on the metals, minerals, and other natural substances in use by the potter, the way of making moulds, etc., interspersed all through the volume.

More minute particulars on the customs of the trade are to be found in Piccolpasso's often quoted MS.; but out of this superfluity of details a little confusion sometimes arises. This remark, however, does not apply to his recipes for the preparation of vitrifiable colours. They strike us by their simplicity, and must, at the time, have been current public property. The fact is that the production of a fine colour does not depend so much on the knowledge of the technical formula as on the discriminating selection of the raw materials—which must be of superior quality—and on the cunning practices and dexterous manipulation of the operator. The rules as to the observation of almost imponderable differences could scarcely be committed to writing, and on that account, although the same recipe was followed everywhere, a colour of particular intensity was made in one factory that could not be produced anywhere else. The presence of this particular colour upon an unmarked piece is often our best aid to identification.

The regular formulæ for colour-making given by Piccolpasso are as follows:—

GREEN :

Antimony	...	...	...	lb. 1 or 3
Oxide of copper	...	...	„ 4	„ 6
Calcined lead (litharge)	...	...	„ 1	„ 2

## DARK YELLOW :

Oxide of iron	...	lb.	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	or	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Lead	...	...	„	$1\frac{1}{2}$	5	„ 2
Antimony	...	...	„	1	3	„ 2

Pure wine lees (tartarate of potash) may be added. The best oxide of iron was that taken from anchors which had long rusted in the sea.

## BLUE :

Zaffre (a preparation of cobalt).

## PURPLE :

Oxide of manganese.

## RED :

A particular red ochre, or Armenian bole.

## BLACK :

The particles which fall from red-hot iron when beaten with the hammer.

The particular ingredients having been duly milled together, the mixture was fritted under the fireplace. For the painter, the vitrified mass had to be finely pounded in a mortar, and then used with the addition of flux, marzacotto or common salt. Painting on majolica required a well-trained hand. The artist had to paint his subject with bold and sure strokes of the brush upon the white enamel still in the raw state, *i.e.* on a pulverulent and absorbent ground. The advantage of this method was that the colours penetrated the enamel and acquired thereby, after the fusion had taken place, greater power and depth of tone. To increase still more the brilliance of the painting and the purity of the stanniferous ground, after the piece had passed through the kiln a first time it was, in some factories, glazed over with marzacotto, and finally re-fired at a lower temperature.

It is well-nigh impossible to imagine to what empirical practices, artful dodges, and tricks of sleight-of-hand, the majolist of yore owed the striking and inimitable effects he succeeded in obtaining from the obviously unscientific means



at his disposal. Modern science, prosecuting with giant strides her glorious course towards unbounded horizons, would doubtless disdain to tarry a while at such an insignificant halting-place. At any rate, it cannot be denied that improved chemistry has done little to assist in the revival of majolica manufacture, and to supply us with the facility of equalling the work of the past. Clever as the imitations of the best types made in recent years unquestionably are—and much has been done in that direction—they all betray the unfairness of their pretensions through the manifest inferiority, I will not say of their artistic treatment, but of their merely technical merit. Jealously the old masters kept their proud secrets, and with them the secrets have died.

It matters little that the physical composition of the colours with metallic *reflets* has not been completely lost. Since the days of Mo. Giorgio and Francesco Xanto, no one has ever been able to reproduce, with the same intensity of nacreous iridescence, the ruby and gold lustres that these peerless conjurers evoked out of the black smoke of their kiln. A thick and poisonous smoke is, as a matter of fact, the active agent on which the potter has to rely for developing the metallic lustres out of the reduced oxides of copper and silver. This is obtained in the following manner. As soon as the enamelled ware which is being fired is deemed to have reached its normal degree of vitrification, all the outlets of the kiln are carefully stopped. Armfuls of gorse branches sprinkled over with turpentine, or any matter productive of a dense smoke, are thrown into the fire-mouth. Deprived of their oxygen through the spreading of the reducing vapours, the coloured compounds assume a tendency to return to the metallic state. This is the crucial moment when brilliant but briskly evanescent effects are making their appearance. The march of the remetallisation must be abruptly arrested; all fire must be raked out and the kiln door hermetically closed. It may be seen that this is no small affair for the one in charge of the firing; long experience and keen sagacity are the only guides to success. When the ware is taken out of



the kiln the *reflets* have lost all brilliancy; this is, however, restored to them by scraping off the scurf that covers the colours and polishing the place with wood ashes.

Indifferently called madreperla, giltwork, or simply majolica, we find the process referred to in many ancient documents. It was current at a remote date among the Moorish potters of Spain; many examples, almost archaic in character, bear witness to its early introduction into Italy.

Passeri, while asserting that the lustred ware originated at Pesaro, borrowed from the MS. of Piccolpasso, handwritten copies of which were in circulation at the time, the recipe for the ruby red; this latter he gave as being the one followed at Gubbio. It was composed as under:—

MAJOLICA RED :					A	B
Red ochre	...	...	...	...	3 oz.	or 6 oz.
Armenian bole (oxide of iron)	...				1 ,,	0 ,,
Ferret of Spain (sulphide of copper)					2 ,,	3 ,,
Cinnabar (sulphide of mercury)	...				0 ,,	3 ,,

To the mixture marked B a little calcined silver was to be added. All the substances were to be pounded in a quart of strong red vinegar, to be evaporated upon the fire, the operation being twice repeated.

Notwithstanding Piccolpasso's cautious assertion that he had never himself practised the process, nor seen it actually practised, there can be no doubt that under proper treatment the foregoing compounds would give a satisfactory result.

Enlarging on the description of the process, the old writer tells us that the majolica—a term he employs here for the first time in the course of his treatise, and by which he means the ware decorated with metallic lustres—is painted on the fired vessels, on the blank places which, after having been outlined with black, were left to receive the iridescent colours. He gives correct plans of the kiln necessary for the process. It is quadrilateral in shape and about three or four feet in width. Enclosed in the square is a circular chamber

perforated on the sides with numerous holes, and which, touching the outer walls at the extremity of its diameters, leaves an open triangle at each corner for the issue of the flames. The special method in which the ware is to be set in is then described. It must be observed that through the absolute closing of the four triangles—the only communication existing between the inside of the chamber and the outside air—a reducing atmosphere might easily and speedily be produced in the kiln. The account goes on telling us how the firing should be conducted. Up to this point all has been clear and explicit, but it ends in a slight disappointment. Not a word is said as to the practical course which has to be followed to control the development of iridescence on the metallic deposits. Instead, we hear of the difficulty that the potter has to contend with to secure even an aleatory success. We are told that the kiln has to be of such small proportions because the process is so uncertain that one can never be sure of the issue. “Out of one hundred pieces placed in the kiln, no more than six may come out satisfactorily. But they are so beautiful and so much admired that it pays one to make them.”

Sulphur played an important part in the reduction of the metallic oxides; according to the proportions in which they entered into the pigments, copper and silver determine the variations of colour. On the majolica of Deruta the prevalence of yellow and light brown lustres is to be accounted for by the presence of a large percentage of silver. Recent experiments have demonstrated that at a certain moment in the firing the substance turns to a very shining but pale yellow colour. The magnificent ruby lustre which distinguishes the productions of Gubbio is derived from copper alone. Any other colour seen, in rare instances, on specimens of varied provenance, such as dark blue, green, or purple, was obtained by the mere application of a transparent metallic film over the ordinary majolica colours. It must be recollected that in all cases the metallic lustre was a superficial coating laid on over paintings which might otherwise have been con-



sidered as finished. For that reason we find not a few pieces bearing conjointly the names of the artist who had painted the subject and that of the master who had embellished it with what was then called "the gilding."

Nowadays, within certain hyper-refined circles, emphatic ejaculations in praise of the fascination of rare bodies and variegated glazes are delivered with such prodigality, that, when judgment has to be passed on the æsthetic value of ceramic works of contrasting character, no words are left to express recognition of artistic merit.

It may be said that I myself have just sacrificed to the reigning infatuation in extending further perhaps than I should have done the account of the technical production of metallic lustres. I will plead guilty to the indictment that I did it in the expectation that it would interest those collectors who retain such preferences. They like to be told that a taste very similar to their own was prevalent during Renaissance times, and they do not feel indifferent to the knowledge of the secret practices employed by our own potters to gratify the present predilection for golden lustres and rainbow colours.

However clearly defined may be the scope of his work, a writer is often induced to make an incursion into the adjoining fields, letting the course of his investigations trespass over the chronological limits he had imposed upon himself. Surely majolica, considered in the double aspect of its native country and of its essentially individual style of decoration, forms a class of pottery which admits of no confusion with any other, and demands accordingly a separate treatment. Yet one cannot ignore the fact that, through its material constitution, majolica is intrinsically connected with certain classes of ceramic wares made in much earlier times and in distant countries, quite dissimilar as it may be in outward appearance. Any attempt to trace the ancestry of Italian majolica brings with it curious recollections of the fictile productions of departed nations. Our task, in the case we have now taken in hand, must, however, be limited to the brief mention of the various kinds of ancient pottery, covered with stanniferous



enamel, from which the later majolica was presumably derived. Any incursion within the domain of classical antiquity should be dismissed for the present. We have no evidence that the Greek and Roman potters—who made such a restricted use of lead or alkaline glazes—ever took advantage of the tin enamel for the completion and embellishment of their wares. But when we bring within our purview a specimen of Italian majolica and one of Hispano-Moresque origin, the striking likeness of glaze and colours, noticeable in both cases, forces upon us the conviction of a direct connection between the two. Nothing is less improbable than the belief that, after having for centuries been successfully practised in Spain, the process of the Moors was one day imported into the neighbouring peninsula. Once launched on this track, one might extend the retrospective survey far back into the past. Hispano-Moresque ware might be shown to be related, through the coloured pottery of mediæval Egypt, with the Persian faïence, and still more remotely with the polychrome friezes and other enamelled decorations of the Assyrian palaces of Nimrod and Darius. Interesting as it would be to dwell upon the main links of this romantic affiliation, I do not think it expedient to give undue development to considerations of merely collateral importance. The moment has now come when all attention should be concentrated on the main subject of this work, and my first care shall be to establish, with the assistance of my learned leaders in the field of inquiry, the approximate epoch in which Italian pottery, freeing itself from the degenerate traditions of the common pot-maker, assumed an essentially national character under the name of majolica.

All such testimonials to the existence of an early art as could be found above ground have long since been strictly examined and made to tell their own tale. From that which is still buried in the bosom of the earth much supplementary enlightenment may be fairly expected. Surprising revelations are bound to come to light when the long undisturbed sites of ancient factories happen to be excavated. It is generally accepted that the term majolica comes from the name of

Majorca, one of the Balearic Islands then in the possession of the Moors, and the centre of a large export trade of a white ware decorated with arabesques traced in golden lustre. If any doubt could have been entertained on that matter, it has been set at rest by a clause of the statutes of the Venetian *Bocalari*, 1426, quoted by Urbani de Gheltof, which prohibits the introduction of all pottery whatsoever manufactured outside the town, except that "*che vien da Magiorica.*"

History relates that, in 1115, the Pisan fleet having taken the town of Majorca after a siege of one year, returned home laden with spoils and booty. The rich plunder captured on the taking of the city is said to have included many pieces of the strange pottery made by the Moors, the most marvellous artificers of the times. Inset into the walls of several of the churches of Pisa, erected about the same period, may still be seen some deep earthen bowls, called in Italian *bacini*, roughly decorated with designs of a style not easily determined. It was tempting to establish a probable connection between these undoubtedly very ancient *bacini* and the trophies brought back by the victorious fleet in the twelfth century. That they were thus placed, as a memento of the defeat of the infidels has, however, been successfully controverted by Drury E. Fortnum in the exhaustive paper he contributed to "*Archæologia*" in 1870, which remains the main source of information on this subject.

In the vicinity of Pisa, at the church of San Pietro in Grado, a number of *bacini* may be seen inserted in the outside walls. In the town itself, the churches of San Sisto, San Andrea, and San Francisco have only kept a few examples of the dishes with which they were, once, richly decorated; to this the empty recesses which once contained the coloured ornaments bear testimony. In a better state of preservation are the original *bacini* still *in situ* at the church of San Martino. All the dishes that remain in the places just mentioned are made of a coarse reddish clay coated over with an *engobe*, or slip, of fine white earth. The design has been incised in the white ground with an iron point, which, reaching the subjacent



red clay, creates a dark outline, stained over with yellow, green, purple and, more rarely, dark blue colour; a transparent glaze covering the whole. This is the simple process often referred to as *mezza-majolica*, or, more correctly, as "*graffito*," a term which explicitly conveys the idea of a pattern that has been "scratched" in the clay. To the rule stated above a complete exception is presented by a fragment discovered by Drury E. Fortnum, also at Pisa, at Santa Cecilia, a Romanesque church consecrated in 1187. This is a portion of a small dish made of a white and porous siliceous clay. Intricate arabesques of a truly Oriental character are painted on the clay under a vitreous glaze deeply tinted with blue. A local origin could not possibly be claimed for such specimen, which corresponds exactly to the description of Syrian, Egyptian or Damascus faience. To the possibility of this having been the work of a Mussulman working, in Pisa, after the method used in his native land may be opposed the difficulty of obtaining the necessary supply of the proper raw materials, which would have stood in his way. That the piece had been imported from the East in the ordinary way of trade appears much more probable.

At Pavia, in the churches of San Pietro in Cielo d'Oro, and of San Michael; at Bologna, in those of San Giacomo Maggiore, San Martino Maggiore, and San Francisco; also in those of San Lorenzo fuor le Mura, San Bartolomeo on the Tiber, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, and Santa Bibiena at Rome, *bacini* of the same kind have been made use of as a regular mode of ornament. Several other Italian towns possess additional instances of their application to architecture, but we always find the *bacini* associated with churches built before 1450; after which date they disappear altogether.

This ubiquity of the coloured earthen discs is certainly damaging to the theory of their having been brought over as war trophies by the Pisan fleet. We may be confident that the Majorcan imports were of the regular Hispano-Moresque style of manufacture. Well, the *bacini* show none of its distinctive features. They bear no signs of a knowledge of

the stanniferous enamel. As for the metallic lustres that some writers believe they have noticed on the surface of a few examples, they are but the faint iridescence that any lead glaze may develop after long exposure in the open air.

On the other hand, no serious objection can be raised to the assumption that they were the work of Italian potters. Nothing in the style of these rudimentary *graffiti* denotes a foreign taste. So far as the technics of manufacture are concerned, ornamented tiles and fragments of domestic vessels of a contemporary period are still in existence to show that the whole process was well known at the time and was applied to many other purposes. The name of mezza-majolica, given to this mode of workmanship, seems to imply that such goods were considered as cheap substitutes for the real articles that came from Majorca. Lastly, a glance at the buildings, in which they figure as an integral part of the well-considered scheme of architectural decoration, will convince us that the *bacini* were not accidentally added to an edifice constructed long before, but that they had had their place marked on the original design, and were purposely manufactured in some pot-works of the district under the supervision of the architect.

It is impossible to commence any historical account of Italian majolica without mentioning the *bacini* of Pavia. They cannot be said to represent the earliest forms of a distinctive ware, true examples of which must be looked for somewhere else, but they are accepted by common assent as the only completely identified and incontestable examples, so far known to us, of a purely ornamental pottery produced in Italy in pre-Renaissance period. Further advances in our archæological knowledge may at no distant date disclose the fact that, long prior to the building of the churches adorned with earthen dishes, some kind of pottery, not unworthy of attention, was made by the Italian potters. It is hard to believe that during the centuries which intervene between the decline of Etruscan and Roman civilisation and the awakening of the middle ages, nothing was manufactured but bricks



and plain terra-cotta, and that this epoch must for ever remain a blank in the ceramic history of Italy.

Meanwhile Egypt, Persia, and Asia Minor went on retaining the old traditions, and continued to produce fanciful clay vessels enlivened with coloured glazes. In Iberia, the Moors were settling the fabrication of a peculiar ware enriched with delicate arabesques painted in light blue and golden lustre upon a ground of milky-white enamel. This was the precursor of true majolica, the Oriental origin of which becomes undeniable when one compares the technical features of the Hispano-Moresque ware with the adaptation of these same processes to the requirements of the Italian potter.

Attractive pottery from distant countries was in demand in all the important towns of the peninsula. The Pisans, the Genoese, and the Venetians, had by force of arms or by diplomacy established trading depôts in Smyrna, Palermo, Rhodes, Alexandria, and the chief ports of the Mediterranean Sea. From these permanent places of settlement, commercial intercourse was maintained, by their mighty merchants, with the inland centres of production as far as Arabia and Persia. Through their agency the treasures of the East were distributed over all the European markets, visited by their ships, between Cyprus and Malaga. In this way distant nations interchanged the special kind of pottery for the making of which each had acquired universal renown. In his oft-quoted description of Spain, Edresi, who wrote in 1145, says, when he speaks about Catalayud: "There a gold-coloured pottery is made which is exported to all countries." As a complement to this information we hear from another writer, Ercolano: "In exchange for the ware that we receive from Pisa we send ships loaded with the pottery from Manises." Pisa was certainly not referred to as an actual place of manufacture, but as a busy centre of international trade. Consequently we may assume that the ware the Pisans sent to the Spanish markets was gathered from many sources. The statement implies likewise that the lusted ware of Manises was highly appreciated in Italy. The quantity of the imports

must have been considerable, judging from what remained of it when the ceramic-collecting rage arose during the middle part of the nineteenth century. It is said that almost the whole of the finest specimens of Hispano-Moresque ware now in our museums was purchased from those Italian palaces, where they had been preserved by noble families as relics of their ancient splendour.

Some writers have advanced the suggestion that the manufacture of majolica penetrated into Italy through Sicily. Vessels of Arabic or Persian character found in the island have been ranged into a group to which has been given the name of Siculo-Arab pottery. This has remained an unsupported conjecture. Local historians deny that the Moors ever manufactured pottery in Sicily, and they consider such vessels must have been imported from Cairo or Damascus.

From the high estimation entertained for the foreign products to the ambition of bringing out something equivalent in appearance, if not exactly similar in substance, there was but one step. Efforts to reach that end were bound to be made by an energetic nation never afraid to face and conquer fresh difficulties. Whether a single one, or many, enterprising Italians repaired to Spain towards the opening of the fifteenth century bent on mastering the secrets of the craft, or whether some experienced Moorish potters, whose assistance made it easy to begin operations at once, were called to help, has never been ascertained. We have good reason for believing, however, that shortly after the new style of manufacture had been introduced, the mysteries of stanniferous enamels and metallic lustres had ceased to be a mystery. It seems as though the knowledge of these materials had simultaneously been turned to good account in more places than one. Of all the ancient towns which boast of having been the cradle of majolica—such as Pesaro, Forli, Faenza, Deruta, etc.—none can substantiate its claim except by linking together, through the researches of its own historian, a chain of indecisive evidence and controvertible assertions. Contemporary writings are silent as to the establishment of an industry the outset of



PLATE I.

TUSCANY. (?)

Early Mezza-Majolica Jar.

Showing Oriental influence.

*British Museum.*











which was doubtless very modest and unpromising. So that, even to this day, it remains a standing problem for an un-biassed investigator to fix the precise date and discover the exact locality of earliest manufacture.

It will have been noticed, through the foregoing remarks, that the possibility of attributing an independent origin to the technical processes adopted and developed by the majolist has not even been hinted at. The reason is that such a possibility appears, to say the least, highly improbable. One can realise that to try and re-invent the secret recipes and irregular methods, which had been carried on for centuries in a friendly country, whence a knowledge of them could easily be obtained, would have been for the Italian potter a sheer waste of trouble and labour. No value is now attached to Vasari's statement that the discovery of the stanniferous enamels is due to Luca della Robbia. The author of the "Lives of the Painters" was only indirectly interested in pottery; doubtless he believed that the first sculptor who gave an artistic application to opaque enamels was the inventor of the whole process. Any pot-maker of his time might have set him right in that respect. The priority of the Moors, and of their early imitators in Italy, cannot any longer be disregarded.

A vague Oriental influence may be traced in the style of some of the most ancient specimens (Pl. I.). It does not go much farther, however, than reminiscences of the shape of some water-bottle, some common drug-pot, or some quaint arrangement of conventional leaves or flowers; similarities often attributable to mere coincidence. As for the few pieces, shining with metallic lustres, and of a decidedly Arabic character, which have been, perhaps inconsiderately, attributed to Pesaro or Deruta because they were found on Italian soil, one has some reason to suspect that they are remnants of the ancient import trade, so that too much discrimination in the task of identification cannot be exerted.

Let us admit the Oriental influence on the productions of the initiatory period, while we wonder at the same time how

rapidly all trammels of this kind were shaken off by the majolist. An alien had been welcomed into the country ; but, like any other alien, the foreign process of pottery manufacture could only settle and thrive after it had passed through a stage of probation and received plenary naturalisation. So strong was the artistic bent of the craftsman's spirit that he could not bind himself to reproduce diapers and arabesques and imitate foreign models. He foresaw that a higher destiny was in store for himself and his handicraft. An art beautiful, noble, and entrancing was then blossoming forth in all quarters of his native land. His inborn love for the beautiful was, from day to day, fostered and refined by the constant additions to the frescoes and sculptures that the churches and the civic palaces offered to his admiration. "And I also am an artist," thought the ambitious majolist, and it was not long before he had proved it by his work.

This forecast of the brilliant future of the majolica painter must not make me forget that we have yet to deal with the period when his art was still on its trial.

Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries the use of earthen vessels for domestic purposes appears to have been general in Italy. They were made of a drab coarse clay coated over with the white clay of Vicenza (?) and enlivened with bold dashes of green and purple colours. The ware was of a rude description, yet not without pretension at being showy and pleasant. As it was, however, intended for the poor, no scheme of decoration could be attempted on that ware which would vitally affect the cost of production. Examples of a superior mode of workmanship are unknown at this date. For the higher classes there was the garish pottery brought over in shiploads by the Pisans and the Genoese—to this the remarkable vases and jugs emblazoned with the arms of the Medicis and other noble families of Italy, unquestionably of Moorish manufacture, bear striking testimony—and the vessels of more precious materials, of local origin. The small collection obtained by the Louvre Museum from Prof. Argnani gives a fair idea of the popular pottery of the middle ages, other than



plain terra-cotta. It consists chiefly of common pitchers, the lack of variety in which is probably due to their having all been discovered on the same spot. From the ungainly proportions of these pitchers we may see that in mediæval Tuscany nothing of the æsthetic taste of the Etruscan potter remained; the utilitarian had got the better of the artist. The piece rests firmly upon a base, inordinately broad, and the protruding beak provides for freely pouring out the liquid; but, to the shame of the rationalistic designer, the shape is uncouth in the extreme. On some examples of the same class the "slip" of white clay is replaced by a thin coat of tin enamel. A clumsy star—a meaningless crossing of painted strokes—makes a pretence at ornament. Sometimes the design takes the shape of the Florentine fleur-de-lys or the semblance of a coat of arms which defies recognition. An exception is to be noticed, however, in the case of an early form of the Manfredi arms, the heraldic cognizance of Astorgio I., Lord of Faenza, which occurs on duplicate specimens of tin-glazed ware preserved in the Faenza Museum. Gradually, improvements are brought into the technique; a dark cobalt blue is added to the primitive green and purple colours, and is used by itself in many instances (Pl. III.). Designs become more elaborate and graceful; inscriptions in Gothic letters make their appearance. I must say that the precise age of these archaic-looking specimens will always remain a matter of pure speculation. In the village pot-works of central Italy the crockery made for the common people had, until recent years, undergone scarcely any alteration in the current shapes and decorations since the Renaissance. It is not, therefore, without diffidence that one can accept any definite attribution for such wares.

Intermixed with the *débris* of tin-glazed ware, numerous fragments of *mezza-majolica* are found in the excavations. It is only to comply with an established custom that I make use of the inappropriate term adopted by Passeri. The words, "*work alla Castellana*," used by Piccolpasso, which would imply that this mode of workmanship had originated at

Città di Castello, or was especially practised by the potters of that town, are equally misleading. As a matter of fact, the *graffito*, or method of incising a bold outline into a thin layer of white clay washed over a dark ground, was known in Egypt, in Asia, and in Rome from remote antiquity and had been employed at a very early epoch in all the pot-making centres of Italy. From the depth at which the fragments are found buried in the soil and the exceptional richness of their decorative treatment, one may assume that pieces with subjects of figures, or motives of considerable ornamental importance, were produced in *graffito* before similar articles were attempted by the painter on opaque enamel. Some plain dishes rudely engraved and covered with a transparent glaze of one colour—dark green or light brown—appear to be the most ancient in date, corresponding in style to the *bacini*. Later on, when the design becomes more complicated, various coloured glazes of a deep and subdued harmony are employed to diversify the details of the composition (Pl. II.). The finest examples of this kind, which show a very great and almost sudden advance in the art, may be ascribed to the second half of the fifteenth century.

The fragments found in Pavia, and now in the British and the Victoria and Albert Museums, are instructive as establishing the site of an important centre of production. As truly admirable examples of the powerful decorative effects to be obtained by the simple association of a robust outline contrasting with the delicate passages from yellow to green and from grey to purple formed by the blending of the cloudy washes of transparent glazes, they have found their way into many ceramic collections. One may point out as masterpieces of this kind the dish with the Mandoline players, and one with Cupids climbing on a tree (Fig. 3), both in the Victoria and Albert Museum; the *tazza* supported by three lions, in the Louvre; and the Paduan dish, with figures of the Virgin and two saints, in the town museum.

It is not in the vessels manufactured for domestic use that one may find superior or simply numerous examples of





FIG. 1.—TILES FROM SAN GIOVANNI À CARBONARI.  
*British Museum.*







**PESARO (?).**

FIG. 2.—TILES FROM THE CASTELLO VECCHIO AT MANTUA. ONE OF THEM HAS THE ARMS OF ISABELLA D'ESTE, FOR WHOM THEY ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN MADE IN 1494.

*Civic Museum, Milan.*





the true majolica made during the fifteenth century. The specimens that have escaped, unscathed, the doom of all that is made of clay are few in number, and may not, after all, be the best representatives of their kind. Fortunately, the majolist of the times has left us more enduring testimonies of his art, in the shape of the tile pavements, in the execution of which he has often displayed the full measure of his capabilities. During the period of stagnation which had paralysed all branches of the sumptuary arts, that of the mosaist and the practice of his precious work in marbles and coloured glass had been allowed to fall into desuetude. Yet when sumptuous edifices were once again being built—when carved, painted, and gilt embellishments had been lavished upon the walls—the floor could not be left without ornamentation. The tile-maker contrived to supply an excellent substitute for the unobtainable mosaic; and nothing could have been more pleasant to the eye than the variegated pavement with which, like a rich carpet, he covered the bare soil. Some of these tile pavements are still in existence in many old churches; and are still in a tolerably good state of preservation owing to their safe position in private chapels which stand off the beaten track of the passing crowd.

The oldest majolica pavement—it is scarcely necessary to remark that it is much posterior in date to the yellow and red inlaid tiles which were brought to perfection for the same purpose in the churches of England and France as early as the thirteenth century—is that in the church of San Giovanni a Carbonara, in Naples. It adorns the chapel which contains the tomb of the Grand Seneschal and favourite of Queen Joanna II., Gianni Caracciolo, murdered in 1432. Allowing for the time that elapsed before the completion of the chapel, we may take 1440 as the approximate date of the pavement. The tiles, square and hexagonal in shape, are coated with a coarse, white and opaque enamel and are painted chiefly in dark blue with touches of green and purple. Flowers and animals of unmistakably Oriental character, grotesque profiles of men and women, the Gothic letter M, and the

rampant lion of the Caracciolos' arms are represented on them (Fig. 1). The British, the Louvre, and other museums have secured odd examples of these tiles. In my opinion the style of the painting suggests a Spanish, if not a Moorish, hand. The tiles are also cut and fitted together in the old Spanish way. Under the domination of the royal family of Aragon, Naples and Spain were in direct communication. It is not improbable that Queen Joanna should have encouraged the settlement of some craftsmen of her own country, namely, of the man who painted not only the Caracciolo pavement but many others long since disappeared. Instances of travelling potters transporting their art from place to place were not rare at that epoch. I may recall the following one, perhaps the least known of all those hitherto recorded.

While preparing his work on the Palais de Justice de Poitiers, Mr. L. Magne examined the original documents relating to the case of a Moorish potter of the name of Jean de Valence; they bear the date 1384. The Duc Jean de Berry had brought "the Sarrazin" to France to make tiles in "*obra dorada*," after the fashion of his own country, for the adornment of the ducal palace of Poitiers. The accounts of the money paid to him, and to the French potters who assisted him in his work, as well as the complete list of the raw materials he employed for the making of the tiles, are still in perfect order. Among the materials supplied we find the following: twenty-three pounds of fine tin, fifty pounds of lead, common salt, zaffre, copper filings, "to make the green and the gold"; and loads of broom branches "for firing the kiln." Two fragments of circular tiles have alone been recovered from the original pavement. They show a fine stanniferous white glaze on which three fleur-de-lys are reserved upon a turquoise-blue ground.

Several churches at Naples still preserve their interesting majolica pavements, but they are all later in date than that of San Giovanni a Carbonara.

The Mazzatosta chapel at Viterbo had a fine polychrome pavement of the early period. The tiles, in the painting of which a dark blue largely predominates, have indubitably





**UNKNOWN PROVENANCE.**

FIG. 3.—SGRAFFITO. CUPIDS IN A TREE.  
(FIFTEENTH CENTURY.)

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**UNKNOWN PROVENANCE.**

FIG. 4.—MEZZA-MAJOLICA. ALLEGORICAL SUBJECT.  
 FIGURES OUTLINED AND SHADED IN BLUE.  
 BORDER-ARABESQUES RESERVED IN WHITE  
 UPON A GROUND OF MANGANESE PURPLE.  
 (FIFTEENTH CENTURY.)

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





an Italian character. A number of them are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

A large plaque, painted with the arms of Feltre, was, according to G. Raffaelli, incrusting in the wall over the entrance gate of the ducal palace at Castel-Durante, the building of which was completed in 1440.

In the Castle of Sant' Angelo at Rome, decorative tiles have been discovered bearing the arms of Pope Nicholas V. (1447-1455).

V. Lazari mentions the pavement once existing in the vestry of the church of Sant' Elena at Venice. On it were emblazoned the arms of the JUSTINIA, at whose expense the place had been decorated (1450-1480).

Another decorative plaque, to be ranged with the tiles, is the one in the Cluny Museum, painted in black upon a dingy ground of stanniferous enamel, with a cock and the date 1466.

Over the main door of the church of San Michael, at Faenza, a plaque, inscribed 1475, is still embedded in the wall.

The most important of all the early pavements I have to mention is the one once in the convent of San Paulo at Parma, and now in the museum of the town. It bears no date, but it is calculated that it was laid down before 1482. The tiles are all square and of 'unusual size ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  in.). Isolated subjects, such as "The Judgment of Paris," "Pyramus and Thisbe," allegorical figures, profile busts of men and women, apparently portraits, etc., form the central points of the ornamental motives of a well-ordered scheme. A shield surmounted by a crozier and flanked with the Gothic inscription "MA—B.N." is considered as having the arms of Maria de Benedictis, who was abbess of the monastery from 1471 to 1482. The painting of the tiles denotes a superior hand; the colours are the flowing dark blue with touches of the light green and purple tints peculiar to early work. According to E. Molinier, the curious tile in the Louvre, No. 1 of the Campana collection, with the figures of Saint Crepin and Saint Crepinian, sometimes considered as one of the most ancient examples of majolica

painting, might be the work of the same hand. Taken as a whole, the San Paulo pavement suggests an idea of what must have been the one which, some years ago, could still partly be seen in the church of N. D. de Brou, in Burgundy. This anonymous work of a great majolist is attributed by N. Rondot to the Italian *faïenciers* who came to settle in Lyons towards 1512. Three tiles in the Louvre, and two others in the Lyons Museum, are all that remain of a series of truly admirable portrait busts in which the presentments of contemporary princes alternate with those of the great personages of classical antiquity. Judging from the masterly drawing of the profiles and the style of the general treatment of the painting, this unique production must have thrown into the shade the finest examples of majolica tile pavements of earlier as well as of later times.

The tiles of the San Sebastiano chapel in the church of San Petronio at Bologna bear incised, at the back, the names of several craftsmen and words to the effect that they were made at Faenza, in Casa Betini. The gamut of colours, all of powerful tint, includes the brilliant orange yellow, the last colour to make its appearance in majolica painting. Each of the many subjects of medallions, emblems, rosettes and interlacings is skilfully treated, but regardless of its association with the rest. It is as though no preconceived plan had presided over the final arrangement. As happens in the present case, it has been noticed in many other instances, that, as a rule, a tile pavement was manufactured far away from the town for which it was intended. Also at Bologna, another unfortunately much damaged example may be seen in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore.

Three plaques, detached from the walls in which they were once inserted, are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. One, of heart shape, has the arms of the Ordelaffi, lords of Faenza; this presents the character of a late fifteenth-century work. The next one is a remarkable panel, of ogival form at the top. It is beautifully painted, in the brightest colours, with the Virgin and Child, and is dated 1489. The last one,



a roundel with a shield of arms, said to have come from a Florentine palace, is inscribed in Gothic letters, "ANDREA DI BONO, 1491." The Boni were a noble family of Florence.

I have still to mention the tile pavement of the Della Rovere chapel in the church Santa Maria del Popolo, at Rome. On it, the arms of Aragon appear in connection with those of Cardinal Giovanni della Rovere, who died in 1483. The tiles are supposed to be about contemporaneous with his death.

I need not add that many other beautiful examples of majolica pavements are still extant, but they must be left unrecorded for the present as belonging to the following century.

It is not from want of due appreciation of his admirable work, or lack of respect for his never-fading memory, that I have tarried so long to bring into this narrative the name of Luca della Robbia. Born in 1400, the Florentine sculptor belongs to that glorious fifteenth century the ceramic history of which I have just endeavoured to sketch, as far at least as it concerns the Italian countries. Among the men who, in his own time, rivalled each other in the noble craft of fashioning and burning plastic clay, the figure of Luca della Robbia stands out like that of a giant. Such a great artist was he that his merits as a craftsman sink into insignificance. The process that he used, but which he did not invent, was a very simple one. It consisted in coating terra-cotta biscuit with a stanniferous enamel, either white or coloured, by the addition of metallic oxides. Whether we look at it from the technical or the artistic point of view, enamelled terra-cotta has little if anything to do with majolica. The former is completed by the purely mechanical application of an opaque and vitrifiable covering over statues or bas-reliefs; a full knowledge of the effects obtained from the cunning use of transparent colours, and a spirited handling of the painting brush is required for the production of the latter. A book on majolica has therefore no right to include the masterpieces of Luca della Robbia and his talented followers. Their productions demand independent and adequate treatment. I much prefer to refer the reader

to the numerous monographs and biographies in which this subject has been exhaustively treated, than attempt to enter into it here, and have to limit my task to a few insignificant paragraphs. Such a course would be entirely unworthy of the great artist and of his work.

I must, however, introduce here a reference to the great Tuscan sculptor in his less-known capacity of a ceramic painter. It is in connection with the twelve roundels of terra-cotta which, from the Campana collection, have passed into the Victoria and Albert Museum, that the name of Luca della Robbia appears as that of the painter or designer of the figure subjects with which they are adorned (Pl. IV.). This attribution was originally made on the authority of Sir Charles Robinson, who grounded his opinion on the texts we quote hereafter. I must say that this attribution has not been endorsed by some subsequent biographers, on the plea that nothing in the whole work of Luca della Robbia recalls the style of the roundels, the cartoons of which could not even have been drawn by the master.

In his "Lives of the Painters," Vasari has devoted one chapter to the works of Luca della Robbia, of which he gives the following particulars:—

"Luca sought to invent a method of painting figures and historical representations on flat surfaces of terra-cotta which, being executed in vitrified enamels, would ensure them an endless duration."

Then further on: "On the monument of Benozzo Federighi, Bishop of Fiesole . . . he painted, on the flat, certain festoons and clusters of fruits and foliage, so skilfully and naturally, that were they even painted in oils on panels they could not be more beautiful or more forcibly rendered."

And lastly: "But a short time before his death he had begun to paint figures . . . on a level surface, whereof I formerly saw certain specimens in his house which led me to believe that he would have succeeded perfectly had not death . . . snatched him prematurely away."

There can be no difficulty in realising what kind of painting



"on the flat" was intended by Vasari, and these roundels may or may not be examples of the work. The tiles that framed the tombstone of the Bishop of Fiesole are still in their place. That these precise specimens came from Luca's *atelier* cannot, in the presence of Vasari's statement, be doubted for one moment. But we also know that he had many assistants, and we cannot accept these graceful arrangements of delicate flowers, which denote the talent of a specialist, as the work of the master's own hand. To some of his other assistants should also be assigned the painting of the circular plaque imbedded over the door of the Museo del Duomo and of the one in the church of Or San Michael in Florence, both mentioned by Vasari, but both of very inferior artistic treatment.

In the course of his researches, Mr. J. C. (afterwards Sir Charles) Robinson came across a contemporary MS. containing the record of a pavement and a ceiling of enamelled terracotta having been made by Luca della Robbia for the decoration of the cabinet of Piero di Cosimo Medici, a personage who died in 1469. Peculiar curves in the shape of the terracotta discs in the Victoria and Albert Museum indicate that they were intended to be fixed, not on a flat wall, but into a vaulted ceiling. Hence came the belief that they might be a remnant of the long-destroyed cabinet of Piero de Medici. The assumption has not, however, been completely substantiated.

The subjects of the twelve months of the year—each represented by the single figure of a tiller of the soil—are depicted on the roundels in bluish monochrome, the style of painting differing materially from that adopted by the ordinary majolist. It is a sort of *impasto* process, dependent on the use of what is called "body" colour. Upon the intermediate tint of the ground the high lights are raised with opaque white; the shadows are washed in and the outline is traced with the main colouring pigment. After the firing, the work, though fully vitrified, retains a dull and matt surface. Perhaps it was for the introduction and improvement of this *impasto* process that Luca della Robbia qualified himself as an

inventor. What he expected from it, we can form no idea. We hear that he was still making experiments in that direction at the end of his life; that is to say, when he was in the plenitude of his talent. Now, none of the specimens I have just mentioned—the only ones which may be said to represent a still unsettled painting process—can possibly belong to that moment. It follows that the wonderful technical improvements witnessed by Vasari are unrepresented in our day. The few architectural vases attributed to the Della Robbia are simply covered with opaque enamels (Fig. 5).

All seems to be straight and clear when we come to that period of the history of Italian majolica which begins with the opening of the sixteenth century. Dated pieces, precise documents, come to clear up many points heretofore wrapped in doubt and obscurity. We find that, within the previous thirty years, the manufacture had been firmly established; nay, that within a few years afterwards it had reached a point that it was never to surpass. Curiously enough, the highly artistic and costly character of the ware, which might have caused the production of cheap and vile imitations, saved it from such an indignity. To exist at all, the majolica of the *cinque-cento* had to be the work of superior craftsmen and talented artists. Dishes, vases, vessels, and tazzas of unique form were made to grace the dresser or the centre of the banqueting board; not to be pressed into daily service. So the precious and elegant vessels continued to be valued and patronised by the noble and the wealthy, who alone could afford to possess such treasures.

Since the time of the Greek painted vases no fictile ware had ever been embellished with representations of figure subjects. It was reserved for the majolist, who fully understood the requirements of his day, to revive this attractive mode of decoration.

In such parturient times, when so much had to be built upon the ruins of what had been, every cultured man, feeling that the part he had to play was that of a leader, was apt to assert the gist of his inborn or acquired beliefs with exaggerated





FIG. 5.—DELLA ROBBIA'S ENAMELLED TERRA-COTTA  
VASE. THE VASE IN LIGHT BLUE, FLOWERS  
AND FRUIT IN POLYCHROME.

*British Museum.*







**UNKNOWN PROVENANCE.**

FIG. 6.—A ROUGH SKETCH. POLYCHROME ON DARK  
BLUE GROUND.

*Salting Collection.*





emphasis. People were then either frivolous to the point of being dissolute, or religious to the extent of blind superstition. The majolica painter was always ready with a vase or a dish, the subject of which would be in accordance with the personal tendencies of his patron. For the faithful lover or the libertine, he had the lovely profile of the *innamorata*, suitably inscribed; or recondite conceits of cupids piercing bleeding hearts with their arrows. For the holy and the sanctimonious, he kept figures of patron saints or scriptural and evangelical pictures fit to adorn a shrine or a convent. Finally, for the learned and the antiquary—who at this epoch formed a not inconsiderable group—he reserved the classical scenes borrowed from Greek mythology and Roman history. In every case the idealistic interpretation of the subject was still further enhanced in the mind of the admirer by the æsthetic charm of the treatment. No limits were imposed on the advance of the art or the aspirations of the majolist. He worked under the patronage of munificent Mæcænæ to whom no scheme he could propose was sufficiently costly or magnificent. Happy times for the artist when the sensitive spirit of his supporters responded so readily to the call of his creative inspiration!

And this is how it came to pass that the love of painted majolica penetrated among the educated classes of rejuvenated Italy.

In the year A.D. 1500, Faenza and Deruta, Pesaro and Urbino, with perhaps a few other factories the genesis of which is not easily traced, had reached the point where, adequately equipped for the struggle, they were competing with one another for the largest share of public favour. The fully experienced master who was responsible in his own locality for the maintenance of that eager competition had little to learn from his rivals. The technical methods of the pottery with stanniferous enamel, arising, doubtless, from one common source, were practically similar everywhere. Each factory had, however, developed some characteristics of its own in the style of decoration. For a time it remained distinctly stamped

on all the productions of the place. Anyone who has made himself acquainted with the peculiar features of each of these styles finds little difficulty in discriminating between the vigorous colours and the strong outlines affected by the early Faenza painter, and the slight arabesques and delicate interlacing which were preferred at Urbino. No one can confound the chamois-coloured lustre of Deruta with the reddish metallic *réflets* that shine upon the ware of Gubbio. Unfortunately, this facility of recognition can only be exercised with respect to early specimens. When local styles had become merged into each other, identification becomes a very puzzling matter. With the constant development of the trade, working associations had been readily formed, to be as readily disjointed. Many an apprentice had become a master: some had managed to start business on their own account. The secrets, the methods, the models, which belonged to the factory where an artist had received his training were transported by him into another place. A few skilled operatives had, perhaps, followed the fortunes of the enterprising man, and the ware they painted in their new employment was marked with the private sign they had used when in the service of another master. These are the tokens and signs which confuse rather than assist in any attempt at classification. There is salvation, however, in the series of standard marks duly accepted as authenticating the work of one master or of one factory. By the comparative examination of typical pieces, bearing such marks, we can fairly determine the distinctive features by which the ware of a particular period, and of a definite origin, is usually characterised. We have cause to regret that the custom of affixing a generic sign to all the productions of one factory was adopted at so late a period. Few are the specimens which bear any unmistakable sign of recognition; numerous are those which are devoid of all indication of relationship with the recognised types. In such cases the correct attribution of certain pieces, many of them of the highest order, depends only on the chances of happy speculation.

To compile a chronological arrangement of the majolica



factories has not, so far, been considered a possible task. Several localities can, it is true, produce documentary evidences establishing the existence of a pot-works, and sometimes of a small guild of potters, at a very early date. In all probability the making of a rude pottery—a trade which is of all times and places—had been practised on the spot long before that of a superior ware glazed over with stanniferous enamel was eventually introduced. It is courting delusion to ask these old documents for information that they cannot give. More than one writer has been too hasty in applying to the majolist such portions of their contents as indubitably refer to the common pot-maker of a previous epoch.

We are certain that Italy had long been dependent on Spain for the supply of fanciful earthen vessels, highly valued for the golden-lustre decoration that brightened their white surface, before a substitute of an identical character could be produced in the country. Knowing also that the first ornamental ware reproducing most happily in prismatic colours the traceries, flowers, and escutcheons of the Hispano-Moresque importations, was made at Deruta, would it be an idle conjecture to imagine that it is to Deruta we must look to find the fountain-head of a fast-spreading and quickly-transformed industry? One might feel inclined to believe it. A dated piece might enable us to settle the question, but no such thing has ever been found. For lack of objective evidence one might propound the authority of a deed of partnership, signed in 1475 by three potters of Deruta and two gentlemen of Perugia, for the making of vases "glazed with tin." But while this strengthens the presumption of an early manufacture, it leaves the question of priority still in the field of conjecture. One may refer to 1500, and the following years, the production of the admirable mother-of-pearl lustres so similar to those of the Moorish potter, that in the case of a vase the shape of which is, like that of the Albarello, common to both countries, identification often becomes impossible.

For a time the ware made at Deruta retained the Italio-Moresque character of the beginning. A diversion in the bent

of the public taste and the gradual changes in the original staff of hands were, later on, to effect the thorough transformation of the prevailing style. The metallic *réflets* were neglected; the palette became that of the other *ateliers*, and the historical subjects, largely indulged in in compliance with the taste of the day, if we except those signed by the celebrated artist known as El Frate who joined the factory towards 1550, might be attributed to any other place.

In point of importance, and also perhaps of antiquity, Faenza takes first rank among the Italian factories. So widespread was the extent of its commercial intercourse that the name of the town had become a byword in international trade; the word Faenza, or *faïence*, being understood as a designation for every kind of white ware that was not actually porcelain. Excavations on the site of the old works have revealed the early date of its primitive manufactures. Inscribed majolica pavements and exceptional pieces prove that in the march towards artistic and technical improvements Faenza was not forestalled by any other centre. A kind of metropolis of the art, Faenza attracted all talents and supplied well-trained hands to minor *ateliers*. The result of this constant interchange of operatives between the majolica works of different provinces was a babel of painting styles nowhere so clearly noticeable as in the wares which can be attributed to Faenza. Again, this last remark does not apply to the work produced during the first part of the sixteenth century. In the almost archaic design of the figure-subjects, in the severe compartment-ornamentation with which they are framed, and in the intensity of the blue-black and saffron yellow, emerald green and manganese purple, which seem to sink deeply into the glaze, some of these early works would have had no rivals, were it not that this very distinctive style was bodily transplanted to Cafaggiolo, where we find it in full bloom a few years afterwards.

In what year Pierfrancesco, son of Lorenzo de' Medici, established an *atelier* of majolica in his villa of Cafaggiolo, near Florence, is yet unknown, but from the character of the work



we may infer that it cannot have been later than the first part of the sixteenth century. One feels quite willing to agree with the theory that the experienced men who started the Cafaggiolo factory had been drawn from Faenza. But whether it be that Pierfrancesco had selected his artists with happy discrimination, or that, working under ducal patronage and no longer for the benefit of a mercenary employer, the same artists were given a free hand in the execution of exceptional pieces, it remains a positive fact that nothing so beautiful as the identified specimens of Cafaggiolo had been made at Faenza before they left, nor was it ever made after they were gone. On their ware one may notice, as a means of identification, a deep red in addition to the usual set of colours.

Siena must be mentioned as an instance of the connection that may be traced between the later and earlier factories. Maestro Benedetto, who had a *bottega* in the town towards 1510, was a native of Faenza. A fine dish signed by his hand is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

From Faenza also came the majolists Biago Biasino, Antonio and Camillo, known to have worked at the works established by the Duke Alfonso d'Este as early as 1501.

At Urbino, the Dukes della Rovere had patronised the potter's art from the latter part of the fifteenth century. The plate in the Pesaro Museum, representing "Phalaris and the Bull," inscribed "Urbinas, 1459," quoted for its early date by many writers, is now, however, proved to be a forgery of the eighteenth century. Of the early work we have no record. The coming of Guido, son of Nicolò Pellipario, a master of Castel-Durante, in 1520, is a memorable event in the history of Urbino. He won for the art of the town the renown that his predecessors Giovanni and Francesco, sons of Donnino Garducci, had been unable to obtain. His works were at first signed Guido Durantino, and later on Guido Fontana. Under this last surname some members of his family acquired celebrity of ceramic artists. The influence of the Swan of Urbino, the great Raffaele, pervades the productions of the factory. They evince pretensions to elegance of design and

delicacy of colouring seldom found to the same degree in the ware of the previous period. The engravings of Marc Antonio and his school are largely put under contribution. If the copy is often too bold to be correct, one cannot deny, on the other hand, that it is always highly spirited. Picturesque compositions of many figures, set out by an elaborate background of landscapes and buildings, are spread over all the available space; thus an unframed picture replaces, on the majority of the Urbino dishes, the former style of decoration in bands and compartments. These pictures are a decided departure from the old taste. In the finest examples of the kind is embodied, in the estimation of their staunch admirers, the very essence of the art of the Italian majolist. The whole mythology is illustrated in the paintings. Complete *credenze*, or sets of vases and dishes, show infinite variations of the same scenes. They are: timid nymphs running away from the audacious faun; Tritons and nereids disporting themselves upon the waves; Olympian gods and goddesses; we have, in short, presentments of the whole phalanx of fabulous personages. Vessels of ceremony—capacious wine-coolers standing on three claws, mighty vases, and magnificent tazzas with masks and twisted serpents forming the handles—were currently produced. *Amatori* plates—painted with the bewitching likeness of the lady-love—were perfected with unprecedented care. The fusible pigments used by the Urbino painters have lost their former harshness. In the class of subjects most often repeated, the pale blue of the undulating seas and cloudy skies harmonises well with the predominating yellows; while transparent greens, delicate greys, and light purple combine felicitously in the treatment of the other parts of the scheme; the quiet general tone being occasionally animated by the interference of the crowning glory of dazzling metallic *réflets*. Arabesques of a new kind, imitated from the antique, had been employed with great success, under the name of *grotesche*, for the decoration of the loggias at the Vatican. The same style of ornamentation was successfully applied to majolica in the *ateliers* of Urbino. The delicate



traceries leave the white ground to play an important part in the general effect. Owing to the introduction of a technical improvement which consisted in a final glazing of the tin-enamel and the whole painted work with the glassy marzacotto, the brilliancy of the white ground, and, indeed, of the whole surface, was greatly enhanced. Such double glazing was seldom employed elsewhere. Several talented artists contributed in succession to maintain the fame of the Urbino factory. Francesco Xanto Avelli of Rovigo possessed the secret of golden lustres, the iridescent *réflets* of which were not and have not been equalled since. Orazio Fontana, the son of Guido Durantino, is often called the best of all the figure painters. Nicolo was highly considered as a decorator. Alas! all that was left of the traditions bequeathed by these great artists was to vanish when the business fell into the hands of the Patanazzis. Despite the ambitious but impotent efforts made to revive the fast-declining art by the last master of the name, the works was closed in 1621.

All minor names in the annals of the Gubbio factory are absorbed in the commanding one of Maestro Giorgio Andreoli. A native of Pavia, he had come, no one knows exactly at what date, and taken up his permanent abode in the small town of Gubbio, in the dukedom of Urbino. In the year 1498, as testified by his portrait in the Gubbio Museum, he was called to the Patriciate—on what account is likewise unknown. A sculptor by virtue of his talent, he followed from necessity the trade of enameller on terra-cotta. To find traces of some work made by him in this capacity one must go back to the years 1511 and 1513, at which time he executed two altar-pieces with enamelled figures combined with architectonic settings, in the manner of the Della Robbias, for the church of San Domenico at Gubbio. Taken down some years ago, these interesting monuments were sold piecemeal to foreign museums, where they are now to be seen. A few painted specimens have attracted the attention of ceramic writers. They bear the name GIORGIO, accompanied with various initials and dates much anterior to the altar-pieces. On their

testimony conjectures have been presented that nothing can ever corroborate. It is now irrefragably proved that none of these inscriptions could have reference to Mo. Giorgio Andreoli. He shares with Xanto the glory, not of having invented, but of having perfected the metallic lustres. They must have worked in association, as some examples bear the joint marks of the two masters. A piece, once in the Bernal collection and now lost sight of, bore the date 1515. The earliest dated piece, a dish in the Berlin Museum, is inscribed "M. G., 1518." As late as 1537 the work of the master was marked with his monogram or signed in full; with very few exceptions all his pieces are completed with metallic lustres. The drawing is so unequal, on the ware so marked, that it suggests the probability of inferior hands having been employed in the *atelier* of Mo. Giorgio, in which case the recognised signs would stand for a trade-mark rather than the signature of the painter. Mo. Cenizio, or Vicenzio his son, who had worked a few years with his father before separating from him, died in 1576. The last dated piece issued from the Ugubian factory, according to Delange, is a dish inscribed "1557—in Gubio, mano mastro Prestino." This cognomen is said to have been assumed by Vicenzio himself. After this date the practice of the multi-coloured lustres as exercised by the Andreolis stops suddenly, and the secret is for ever lost. Thanks to the established custom of marking every piece, identification offers no difficulty, and Gubbio is therefore amply and authentically represented in our museums. The majolica painter has always entertained a predilection for the Metaurian ware, and particularly for pieces with metallic lustres. Many a connoisseur, forgetting the rightful claims to admiration imposed on us by the severe style and sombre lines of the early examples of Faenza and Cafaggiolo, delights exclusively in the enjoyment of the brilliant colours and refined treatment of the elegant creations of Urbino and Gubbio, in which he sees the apogee of the art.

Castel-Durante was undoubtedly a most prolific centre of production. We have the list of all the *botteghe* established in



PLATE II.

TUSCANY. (?)

Dish of Mezza-Majolica. Sgraffito (XV. Cent.).

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











the town; nowhere else were they so numerous. None of the masters has, however, achieved particular distinction. A dish exhibited in the South Kensington Museum in 1867, and dated 1507, with the mention that it was made in Castel-Durante, denotes that the manufacture at that time was in no way inferior to that of the most advanced factories. Trophies and attributes in "grisaille," sometimes relieved with golden lustre, were among the specialities of the artists. In 1614, Castel-Durante, by grant of Pope Urban VIII., became Urbania, and the tottering industry lingered in the town until 1757.

Venice was never short, as we have seen above, of the highly appreciated lusted ware from Valencia that her ships brought in by heavy cargoes. This facility of supply seems to have deterred the local pot-makers from any attempt at improving their precarious handicraft. We have vague records of strangers erecting kilns in the town and producing, privately, painted pottery, of which no examples are now in existence, between 1489 and 1515. But this again had little, if any, influence on the development of the industry. It was only some years later that it received the required impetus through the arrival of experienced majolists from Faenza, Castel-Durante, and other parts of Italy. Piccolpasso, in 1548, praises the beauty of the Venetian ware. This is also the period we are referred to by such dated and marked pieces as have come under notice. A particular style sprang from this combination of hands trained in different schools. The forms, which lost all simplicity, were heavily gadrooned, embossed, and fluted. The bluish enamel, the *berettino* of Faenza, was a great favourite. Intricate schemes of ornamentation, flowers, garlands and festoons, sometimes framing allegorical figures, were skilfully shaded in dark blue and lightened with opaque white. Of a taste more showy than elegant, the patterns, influenced by the coming baroque style, foretell the decadence which was at hand.

Naples and the tile pavements of San Giovanni à Carbonara have supplied us with the authenticated example which heads

the chronological synopsis of the march and progress of Italian majolica. Two centuries have elapsed, and it is again at Naples, or rather at Castelli, that after this long interval we find the Southern majolist coming to the front with a transformed ware, after which the artistic period of the history of majolica comes to an end.

One wonders what kind of ornamental pottery may have been manufactured at Li Castelli della Valle Siciliana d'Abruzzo in the sixteenth century that was considered worth exchanging against the lustred ware of Spain? Historians have adduced unimpeachable texts referring to the carrying on of such a trade from the fourteenth century, but they have not produced any material proof of the fact; nor do they, as usual, seem to have troubled themselves about it. We cannot take as an answer to the foregoing question the insignificant fragments of terra-cotta and earthenware vessels that have been turned up in excavations. Towards 1590 a memorable name appears in the civic records. It is that of Francesco Grue, a *vasaio* of the town. Of him we know nothing more than that he was the father of a long line of descendants, most of them engaged in the pottery trade. To his son, Carl Antonio Grue, must be ascribed a leading share in the revolution that took place, and in the accomplishment of which the majolist forfeited all decorative tendencies. The old centres, which had made no efforts to keep up with the times, were practically extinct. Some attractive novelty in the choice of designs could alone restore to painted pottery the place it was fast losing among the articles of household luxury. From 1655 to 1723, Carl Antonio, with the assistance of his four sons, flooded the market with quite a new kind of ware, which, departing from the Renaissance mannerism, chanced to meet the capricious dictates of the current fashion. Thenceforth, to be considered "up to date," a dish or a vase had to be treated in the same manner as would suit a fan or a tapestry cartoon. The utmost capabilities of the technical processes began to be neglected. It mattered little whether the colours were faint and the glaze poor. A minute and stippled treat-



ment, which would render all the leaves of a tree and all the cracks of its bark, would make up for all material deficiencies and satisfy both the artist and his patron. Porcelain painting was soon to emphasise these finical affectations and be accepted with a consensus of approbation; but applied to majolica decoration the taste was certainly out of place. Gilding affixed in bordering lines or in relieving touches all over the subject completed the would-be likeness of an example of late Castelli faïence to a piece of European porcelain.

I know the ware has its devotees. A Carl Antonio Grue dish, with landscape and figures highly finished and copiously furnished with gilding, stands, in the estimation of the faddist, much above the powerful—perhaps almost brutal—manifestations of the fifteenth century. It is the unwritten law. Not a few of those who think themselves serious art-lovers will candidly prefer the sweet platitude of a virgin's head by Carlo Dolci or Sassoferrato to the troubling mystery of the *Joconda* of Leonardo; others are prepared to give one hundred times as much money for one of those velvety smudges called "mezzotints" (with uncropped margin, of course) as they would think of offering for a marvellous line-engraving of Drevet or Edlinck. Meanwhile there is many a man of keener sensitiveness and judgment who likes to be lifted off his feet, to soar, under the guidance of some heaven-born genius, into the lofty regions where genius dwells, and who would scorn to remain on the level ground following minor leaders, whatever pleasure may be obtained in sauntering along the smooth way. But what is left for such a man to do or say when confronted by unalterable convictions? Nothing more than to shake his head and murmur, "Let them be forgiven, for they know no better." And so the Castelli faïence may always have its admirers who will value its faded and feminine character far above the manly vigour extolled by sounder critics as the attribute of the ware of older times.

This tardy and ill-conceived revival could only delay for a while the fatal end of artistic majolica. The next century has little to show us which is really worth the name. Genoa,

Albissola, and Savona were then the only busy centres of ceramic industry. Piccolpasso's MS. gives a few sketches of the patterns which were executed—indifferently, as it appears—at Venice or at Genoa. Being no doubt confounded with the productions of Venice and Savona, no piece of Genoese manufacture has been identified which could be ascribed to that period. Later productions, however, marked with the beacon or the sun, are plentiful. The name of the Albissola factory has come down to us through the inscription on a panel of wall-tiles, which says "Fato in Albissola, 1576." Savona, an important industrial centre, supplied the markets of the South with domestic ware. That it occupied a certain rank for the production of articles of a higher order may be inferred from the fact that when Louis de Gonzague, having left Mantua to assume the title of Duke of the Nivernais, resolved to establish the manufacture of Italian majolica in his good town of Nevers, it was from Savona that there came the brothers Conrade, experienced masters by whom the project was successfully carried out, in 1602.

One must take the ware of the three Ligurian factories as a compact group. To discriminate between their respective productions is a task, for the present at least, not to be attempted. Such disparities as might have existed in specimens of particular origin have been smoothed down and obliterated in the aggregate through a continual interchange of painters facilitated by the close neighbourhood of the works, and above all by reason of the absence of a leading spirit in each place. Neither can we find much assistance in the marks; local collectors do not agree as to the correct attributions. The considerable output spreads over the larger part of the eighteenth century. It consists of dishes and vessels, often of ostentatious pretensions, and always of questionable taste. The abnormal forms are embossed with heavy rococo scrolls, and the blue paintings with which they are covered, whether they be figures or ornamental subjects, are executed with the grossest carelessness. Nothing but a long familiarity with the debased styles of the period could make one recognise



the Italian origin of such commonplace patterns. They might all, for what we know, be inferior examples of French, Dutch, or German origin. This Genoese faïence was still a fancy ware depending on its showy look for patronage, but it was no longer the ware of the man of means and taste. A most significant sign of decadence were these pitiable efforts of the national manufacture attempting to fight against fashionable imports by clumsy handling of the enemy's own weapons.

Were it not for the unavailing simulations of foreign designs resorted to in its dying days, Italian majolica could justly boast of never having suffered the essence of its original style to be affected by the influence of any ceramic ware produced out of its native land. Yet the apparition of Oriental porcelain—introduced into Italy as early as into any other European centre of artistic evolution—had not failed to create an intense sensation within the most cultured circles. One may go further and say that nowhere else had the transcendent superiority of its primal substance been more fully appreciated. This is borne out by the fact that the first earthen vessels made in Europe which presented the qualities of whiteness and translucency so much admired in the Eastern porcelains were due to the experiments of Italian alchemists. If we can trust to documentary evidence, in 1470, Maestro Antonio of Venice, and after him, in 1519, Leonardo Peringer, also a Venetian, had accomplished the wonderful discovery. We have, it is true, no vouchers for the accuracy of these statements. But what is placed beyond doubt is, that towards 1575, fine artificial or soft porcelain was manufactured at Florence under the direct patronage of the Grand Duke Francesco di Medici. In his private laboratory the learned Francesco, assisted by Bernardo Buontalenti, had discovered the secret of the translucid ware. It is said that the Grand Duke took pride in fashioning with his own hands the pieces intended for presentation to mighty personages; the finest specimens were completed with gold or silver mounts. Such historical records as exist on the matter are supported not only

by marked examples of incontestable origin, but also by a copy of the recipes of the paste and glazes used in the manufacture of the Medicean porcelain, which shows how rationally and definitely their material composition had been settled. Casting a glance over these recipes, we are surprised to see how little they differ from those of the Rouen, Saint-Cloud, Vincennes, and other fritted porcelains of the next period. Proud as they are of rivalling the intrinsic qualities of the Oriental ware, none of the vessels marked with the Duomo of Florence or the capital F—initial of the name of the Grand Duke—affects, however, any pretension at reproducing its exotic style. The fanciful shapes are modelled in the pure Renaissance taste by an Italian artist; the scrolls and foliage, which, boldly traced in blue under the glaze, constitute the usual decoration, are borrowed from the embroideries and intarsias of the day, and seem to be mere replicas of those seen on the white and blue majolica of Faenza. From this strict adherence to established notions—in a case where an entirely new ware was being brought out in imitation of a foreign article, and when a close facsimile might have been desirable—we may judge of the power that the traditions of the craft exerted, up to the last moment, over the work of the Italian potter. Such a sturdy indifference to the changes that supervened in the other branches of the decorative arts during the same lapse of time is without a parallel in the history of the pottery of other nations.

We know what happened in the following century with the pioneers of porcelain manufacture. Every one of them—whether he was French, German, or English—having secured a creditable substitute for the mysterious substance of the Eastern ware, nourished but the one ambition of presenting servile reproductions of the Chinese and Japanese prototypes, so accurate in every respect that the copy might be mistaken for the original. Under such conditions it is obvious that attempting any novelty in the way of shapes or decoration would have been out of the question. Such an unpromising course was, however, the one followed not only by the porce-



PLATE III.

TUSCANY.

Oak Leaf Jar, Early Tuscan Ware (XV. Cent.).

*British Museum.*











lain-maker but also by the faïencier, who gloried in the unbroken repetition of his pseudo-Oriental pattern up to the moment when he ventured to introduce a style more congenial to the artistic tendencies of the epoch. What I wish to bring out and set to the credit of the majolica of Italy is that, unlike the kindred ceramic productions of other countries, it so long kept free from the sway of extraneous influence, and also how it is that the ubiquitous counterfeit of Eastern rarities is so conspicuously absent from the whole range of its varieties.

Italian majolica, on the other hand, has been imitated all over Europe. At the time of their prosperous activity, the leading factories of Faenza and Urbino could not prevent the overflow of their numerous staff of well-trained workmen from escaping all control and spreading far and wide, causing the establishment in distant lands of a serious competition with the original centres. Many a faïence factory, afterwards deserving to be noted for the original character of its products, began by producing, after the Italian methods, the very kind of ware imported by the enterprising majolist to whom it owed its foundation.

As early as 1503 we find Francesco Niculoso, a native of Pavia, but evidently trained in one of the Faenza works, established at Triana, a suburb of Seville. There he produced—not enamelled terra-cotta in the Della Robbia style, as he is credited with by most writers—but ordinary majolica tiles and panels for wall decoration, still to be seen in some of the churches and convents of the town. The important altar-piece, once in the chapel of the Alcazar and lately transferred to the civic museum, is profusely decorated with figure-subjects and ornaments of masterly execution. For artistic and technical excellence the paintings of this diminutive monument may stand comparison with those of the finest tile pavements of the Faentine masters Niculoso had striven to emulate. His workshop was to develop into a large factory and become the nucleus of a thriving and permanent ceramic

industry. Spain had once exported to Italy the rudiments of the manufacture. In its turn Italy was to teach Spain how to decorate the stanniferous enamel in a style very superior to that developed by the Moorish potter. The oldest specimens of another Spanish factory, Talavera la Reyna, also show signs of an Italian origin.

In France it is recorded that in 1512 no fewer than five Florentine master potters were at work at Lyons. In the same town, J. Gambin and D. Tardesir, both of Faenza, were granted a privilege for the manufacture of majolica after the manner of their own country, in 1574. The Louvre and the Lyons Museums possess a few examples of their work. They are painted, by a rather inferior hand, with subjects copied from the woodcuts of the illustrated books issued by the Lyons printers; yet they are quite Italian in character.

At Paris, Geronimo della Robbia and his pupil Ascanio executed some extensive enamelled terra-cotta work for the decoration of the now destroyed "Château de Madrid," when it was being built in 1529.

Masseot Abaquesne, a talented majolist who had his ateliers at Rouen towards 1540, painted in the pure Italian style several remarkable tile pavements, parts of which are still in existence.

Little is known about the result of the experiments attempted at Nîmes by Sigalon, and at Nantes by Jehan Ferro, at a corresponding period.

Of the success that attended the establishment of a faïence-works at Nevers by the brothers Conrade of Savona I have spoken already. It was from these works that the experienced operatives were drawn who assisted Edme Poterat in starting the manufacture in the town of Rouen.\*

In Germany, Hirschvogel imported from Venice the secrets of the opaque white enamel and of the brilliant majolica colours. So widely patronised was the new kind of ware he

\* Compare the details given in the Author's "French Faïence." Cassell and Co., London, 1903.



introduced that it was not long before its fabrication extended all over the empire.

Unimportant as the subsequent development of tin-enamelled pottery in England was, I cannot refrain from stating that here also efforts were made to introduce its manufacture. It has often been noticed that the earliest pieces of the Lambeth faïence, subsequently called English Delft, show unmistakable signs of Italian influence.

It is needless to multiply the number of instances in which the imitation of Italian majolica laid the foundation of a large and prosperous industry. The examples I have selected for particular mention are more than sufficient to show the part it has played in the annals of European ceramics. The authority of the imported rules may have persisted during a longer or shorter period, or may have proved more or less effective according to the conditions and circumstances through which their activity was either fostered or hampered, but by casting a retrospective glance far enough into the past we find the Italian influence presiding over the growth of many foreign branches of the art, however little these latter may have, in their modified form, retained of the restrictions imposed upon their preliminary state.

A few words remain for me to say about the revival of majolica manufacture in Italy which, in obedience to the impetus that was given at that moment to the advance of all industrial arts, took place towards 1850. The catalogues of the universal and local exhibitions of the next fifty years give us an idea of the number of potters, professional and amateur, who then boasted of having recovered what they called the lost secrets. Two famous firms—Ginori of Doccia and Cantagalli of Florence—stand ahead of the group of minor undertakings that joined in the movement; A. Minghetti and Sons, of Bologna, may also be mentioned. At the Ginori factory, through the collaboration of G. Freppa and the chemist G. Giusty, the first commendable replicas of ancient models were produced for the Paris Exhibition of 1855, where they obtained immense success. Ulisse Cantagalli appeared

much later in the field. In 1878 he transformed the pot-works he had inherited from his father, and where nothing but common earthenware had been manufactured up to that time, into an artistic establishment which had for its speciality the reproduction, at a moderate price, of the masterpieces of Italian ceramics. There, the enamelled terra-cottas of the Della Robbia, the painted vessels of Faenza and Urbino, the lusted dishes of Deruta and Gubbio, were imitated to perfection, and choice copies of the typical examples could be readily obtained. In the very ability with which these alarming reproductions have been executed lies the danger which is to confront the next generations of majolica collectors. I know that there is such a thing as knowledge and good judgment to guide the pursuit of the collector. I believe that a truly genuine specimen exhibits a boldness and an accuracy of design which, coupled with the intense brightness of the colours, are not to be seen in a spurious piece. I am also aware that a man of experience may have many minor tests of his own for detecting a fraud. With all that, in many instances I should not like to assert the infallibility of a merely conjectural attribution. Let us suppose, for instance, that some years have elapsed since a particularly successful counterfeit has left the hands of the forger. The somewhat rough handling to which the piece happened to be submitted has toned down the crudity of the white enamel, slightly chipped the edges, and time has imparted to the metallic *réflets* the patina that age alone can give. Then, gentle reader, I maintain that you and I, despite our boasted experience and cautious ways, may be very near falling into a mistake that we should have, on our awakening to the sad reality, every reason to be ashamed of. A profitable lesson comes, however, out of the wise fear of the lurking danger. While we prosecute a thorough study of the work of the old masters we must not neglect to make ourselves acquainted with the distinctive features of the meretricious productions of the modern forger, for more than one alluring but deceptive example of suspicious majolica is sure to come across our path.



PLATE IV.

FLORENCE.

One of the Roundels attributed to Luca Della Robbia.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*









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# I

## THE MARCHES

FAENZA—FORLI—RIMINI—RAVENNA—BOLOGNA—IMOLA

### FAENZA

WHETHER Faenza stands first in order of date among the majolica factories at work in Italy during the second half of the fifteenth century is still left an open question. "It is possible"—"It is probable"—"It is certain," are the comparative degrees of opinion entertained by the local antiquaries. They are quite willing to continue to be divided on the respective merits of the three propositions. But they would all unite, as one man, against any outsider rash enough to suggest that, one day, the priority of Faenza as a centre of majolica manufacture might have to give way before some indubitable proof of the pre-existence of a more ancient factory. Any impartial spirit having weighed the pros and cons of their arguments will hesitate to take a decided stand on one side or the other.

The evidences adduced in support of the antiquity of the ceramic industry in Faenza are many, and a few of them appear almost conclusive. It is justly represented that we possess an untold number of fragments unearthed from the soil of the town, many wall-plaques, and a few tile pavements, all of which are of incontestable origin, and bear dates much anterior to any that have ever been found on the specimens of stanniferous-enamel ware coming from any other place. This, however, may be controverted with the remark that neither the place nor the time at which a home-

made substitute was provided in Italy to compete against the Spanish imports has ever been disclosed to us. We may believe that much more ancient products than those of Faenza are still in existence, but that, none of them having been inscribed with a name or a date, they will remain—until they are recognised—of no documentary value for the general historian.

On the other hand, the early commercial importance of the united manufactories of Faenza, which had no rivals at the time, must be taken into consideration. A regularly established trade with several foreign nations made the town and its wares so well known in the European market that the name of “*faïence*” was ultimately applied, without distinction of origin, to every kind of pottery which offered some similarity of aspect to the painted vessels that came from Faenza. The idle theory that the term was derived from the name of a French village in the department of Var is really not worth discussing.

It may be added that, as far as we know, the great variety of modes of decoration inaugurated at Faenza was imitated everywhere, while we do not hear of a particular style created in any other place having been adopted at Faenza. From the outset, the original pottery works, which multiplied rapidly in the city, seem to have been rich enough in skilled hands, and sufficiently indifferent to the spread of their practical secrets, to let the best men depart from their training place and assist in the foundation of many a competing factory in Italy and abroad.

Until historians have agreed as to the rank that Faenza should occupy in the chronological record, the considerations I have just rehearsed should warrant the collector in search of instruction in beginning a systematic survey of the whole subject by the study of this, the most important centre of production of Italian majolica.

Out of his dusty parchments the archivist brings to light some thought-engrossing passages referring to pot-making in the dark ages, and the working archæologist in



PLATE V.

FAENZA.

The Syren Dish. An example of the Early Period.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











**FAENZA.**

FIG. 7.—DISH WITH THE MONOGRAM Y.H.S. AND  
THE DATE 1491. DESIGN IN WHITE  
ENAMEL ON DARK BLUE GROUND.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





his turn exhumes from the soil of old cities fragmentary pots and crocks of undetermined antiquity. Rarely does it happen that a relation between the crocks and the scripts can be clearly established. The historians of Faenza can quote ancient MSS. alluding to some local potter, but the work that might be attributed to his particular period has never been identified. It consists usually of plain terra-cotta altogether wanting in artistic interest. Much more precise is the record of an agreement concluded in 1454 between Isaaco di Dondi, a Paduan nobleman, and Giacomo de Pietro, "*Bocalaro in Faenza.*" It deals with the making of a service of fine white majolica, which was to be painted with beautiful garlands and medallions, having in the centre the Dondis' coat of arms *in gold*. Beautifully painted majolica may have been made at that moment, although we have no dated example of it, but the mention of its being embellished with gilding may well cause us some surprise. Probably the word "gold" was employed to mean the Spanish golden-lustres then in high fashion. In this case we should have to credit Faenza with the knowledge of a technical secret the practice of which has never been suggested by any authentic specimen of its ancient fabrication; the excavations directed by Prof. Argnani have not yielded a single fragment of lusted majolica.

The excavations just alluded to have proved of the greatest historical importance. The whole of the discoveries have been admirably reproduced in his works by Prof. Argnani. In certain specimens of archaic character, made of red or yellow clay glazed in brown or green, we may recognise the degenerate descendants of the noble Etruscan vases. In others we may detect a prelude of what was to be majolica in its finest form. We shall leave aside all examples of "graffito" ware, with designs incised upon the surface and a covering of self-coloured or polychrome glazes, interesting as they may be, simply because they do not exactly enter into our programme. Moreover, their distinctive character is not sufficiently marked to establish any criterion through which

we should be able to discriminate between them and the wares of the same class produced in other places.

Our earnest attention is claimed by the white-ware jugs discovered on the site of the Palazzo Manfredi, built by Astorgio I., who was lord of the city in 1379. On the front of some of these jugs we see rudely painted, in manganese ore and copper green, a coat of arms surmounted by the head of a unicorn. It is the shield which Astorgio Manfredi assumed in 1393, and which was not used after him by any other member of the family. We may assume on this testimony that these jugs fairly represent the average quality of the pottery made in the town towards 1400. Most of them show the usual wash of fine white earth over the drab-coloured clay in use at that period. One cannot contest, in this case, the correct application of the term *mezzamajolica*, for the only difference between this and the real article is in the nature of the superficial white covering. One of the jugs happens to be—quite exceptionally—glazed with a thin coat of stanniferous enamel. This is surely a remarkable instance of the early use of the enamelling compound. But to build upon this unique instance a prejudiced theory, and find in it a conclusive proof that the art of Italian majolica originated in Faenza, is trusting too confidently to the trend of inconsistent deductions. Yet this is the error into which Malagola, Argnani, and their followers have fallen, and against the fallacy of which we should be on our guard. They will not admit that any other centre may have had a share in the discovery of the opaque enamel. They forget that its composition—accurately given in several mediæval treatises—was at this time known all over Italy, and that the ware itself had long been extensively imported from Spain. Although no tangible evidence has as yet come to hand, it is quite possible for us to believe that some sort of majolica, perhaps superior in quality to the primitive pottery discovered in the excavations of the Manfredi Palazzo, had been produced outside Faenza at an early date.

How are we, for instance, to settle the provenance of such





**FAENZA.**

FIG. 8.—PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN PERSONAGE.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**FAENZA.**

FIG. 9.—DISH FROM THE HENDERSON COLLECTION.

*British Museum.*







**FAENZA.**

FIG. 10.—DISH WITH CUPID ON GOOSE.

*British Museum.*



specimens as the one preserved in the Sèvres Museum? It is a dish of archaic character, bearing, painted in blue, green, and yellow, the figure of a man on horseback in the costume of the fifteenth century, and the signs ++++ ||| |||, which have been construed as standing for 1448. The attribution to Faenza as well as the reading of the date are purely hypothetical. Many pieces in our museums offer the same difficulty of identification.

With regard to the two plaques preserved in the Cluny Museum, the earliest dated examples of their kind, uncertainty is set at rest. One of them is a shield-shaped slab, painted in black, on a dingy white ground, with a cock holding in its beak the Florentine fleur-de-lys; it is dated 1466. The other, a large roundel painted in polychrome, has in the centre the monogram Y.H.S.—framed in finely ornamented bands—a dedicatory inscription, and the date 1475. The colours employed are about the same as those we should find on the work of a much later period, with the exception of the bright yellow, which had not yet made its appearance. Convolutèd acanthus leaves, rays in spirals, diapers traced in dark lines upon a band of a lighter colour, and other motives of the Faentine ware are easily recognisable in the design. Both plaques have evidently been detached from a wall. The last one once stood over the entrance door of the Church of San Michaelè at Faenza.

Judging from the skill displayed in the painting of this roundel, one may assume that the art of the majolista had then reached a fair development. It is therefore surprising to notice that Garzoni, referring to Faenza and its trade, in his book *La Piazza Universale*, published in 1485, extols the beauty of its white vessels, which he declares to be unequalled, while he says nothing of the painted majolica for the making of which the town was to become so celebrated. Presumably the higher class of ware was still on its trial, and its fame had not spread very far at that date.

Towards 1487, the date inscribed on the tile pavement of the Basilica of San Petronio at Bologna, the Faentine majolista



seems to have said his last word in the matter of technical improvements. Doubtless there are numbers of vases and dishes of later times which may justly be considered as superior in artistic refinement to the Bologna pavement. But for him who appreciates, above all, depth and brilliancy of colour, broad style and freedom of treatment—in short, the truly decorative effect—some of these modest tiles will hold their own against all rivals. That they were painted at Faenza does not admit of any doubt. The artists of the Betini factory, a well-known workshop of the town, have inscribed their names upon that portion of the work for which they were each responsible. These names read as follows: Bologniesus f(e)cit—Petrus Andrea(s) *de* Fave(n)tia—Chornelia Be(tini) Faventicie—Xabeta Be(tini) Faventicie—Ze(n)tila Fave(n)-tici—and Bologni . . . Betini Feci(t), which L. Frati proposes to read: Bologniesus in casa Betini Fecit. One may see that the fair sex is largely represented in this little group of painters. One of the painters, Petrus Andreas *de* Faventia, has depicted himself upon one tile in the act of placing a vase in the kiln. The introduction of the lancet—the emblem of the Manfredi—and of a few local coats of arms, further helps us to fix the origin of this interesting monument of the ceramic art. Possibly a first attempt at a work of such magnitude, the pavement looks as though it had been begun and ended without the necessity of a previously prepared sketch having ever been felt. Such well-balanced divisions of the space, such geometrical combinations of the main lines, as were in later time to make the design of a tile pavement resemble that of an antique mosaic or an Oriental carpet, are in the present case manifestly absent. Each of the hexagonal tablets of which it is composed may be taken as forming in itself a whole subject. They contain, indifferently, representations of human figures or animals, rosettes or flowers, emblems, or armorial shields. In their final arrangement an extempore plan, more fanciful than systematic, has been resorted to. Yet, owing to the harmonious blending of the colours, the general effect is most pleasant to the eye.



**FAENZA.**

FIG. 11.—SPOUTED VASE, DATED 1537.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**FAENZA.**

FIG. 12.—DISH WITH A SHIELD OF ARMS, WITH  
CHERUB ABOVE.

*British Museum.*



This standard example of the early stages of the art is of incomparable value for the study of Italian majolica. Its well-defined features, which we recognise in many contemporary specimens, allow us to restore to Faenza much of what has been heretofore, erroneously, attributed to other centres. Early as its date is, this pavement embodies in its technical execution a sum of newly-discovered processes which were never to be excelled. From among the dated pieces in which the style prevailing at the period is fully illustrated I shall select for special mention the polychrome dish of the Davillier collection. It is painted with a group of five figures partly arrayed in classical costume; they stand on the sea shore, the background consisting of a very elaborate landscape. The dark blue band of the border is ornamented with vases, palmettes, and cornucopias in the antique taste. The date 1498 is inscribed on a scroll. (Sèvres Museum.)

The mass of ancient documents extracted for our own benefit from the civic archives do not yield so much information as one might have expected to obtain from such a source. They consist chiefly of deeds-of-sale of land and houses. Through such deeds the names of many minor factories have come to our knowledge. They are unfortunately little better than records of empty names. We hear nothing about the conduct of the trade and the condition of the potters. We see no traces of any corporation of the craft or of the importance that the masters may have had in municipal affairs. The first names entered in the roll have but a shadowy connection with the making of majolica, and we shall not trouble about them. To our surprise, the Bettini family, the joint painters of the pavement described higher up, does not appear in these desultory records. With the year 1484 that of the De Bettissii is mentioned for the first time. Later on it occurs frequently on the registers, and in 1570 one of their descendants, Don Pino de Bettissii, is qualified as "*Maestro delle majoliche de Faenza*." They were then townsfolk of long standing, and were held in high estimation in the trade. This is borne



out by the fact that Antonio de Bettissii was selected to manufacture the service of majolica that the commune of Faenza presented, in 1574, to the Cardinals Buoncompagnio and Guastavillani. Various marks, in which a capital B is combined with other letters, usually attributed to the Bettinis, might designate the products of that factory.

Gregorio Zuccoli, who wrote in 1522, says: "Faenza has brought the art of majolica to the high degree of excellence for which it is known all over the world." (Genolini.)

Judging from the number as well as the average excellence of the specimens which, through their inscriptions, marks, or other distinctive signs, may be assigned to the CASA PIROTTA, one may fairly conclude that this firm held at one period the foremost position among its contemporaries. We learn from a deed dated 1519 that, in that year, the three sons of Mo. Pirotto de' Pirotti purchased a house in the suburb of San Vitale, presumably with the intention of starting there the manufacture of majolica. This establishment, afterwards to be known as the Casa Pirotta, is supposed to have been the original house. In 1538 the lease of the Casa Pirotta is renewed for twenty-nine years in favour of Battista di Negro de Pirotti. The building was situated on the ground where the Orphanage now stands. During the work of excavation, heaps of fragments of finished pieces of immense interest were discovered. These fragments, mostly in the possession of Prof. Argnani, have been reproduced in his books. Another member of the family, Domenico Pirotti, had works of his own in the vicinity of those of the parent stem, which he sold, to one Mo. Andrea de Scardavi in 1540. The dates of the pieces made at the Casa Pirotta, so far recorded, range from 1525 to 1536. But the factory was in existence many years later. The names of the Pirotti figure in the civic registers down to 1632. A double circle crossed with two lines at right angles, and sometimes bearing a crescent in the centre, is considered as having been the usual mark. The production of the Casa Pirotta was considerable and of great variety. In every collection where it is represented the specimen is

PLATE VI.

FAENZA.

Battle of Centaurs and Lapithæ.

After LUCA SIGNORELLI, with the Arms of GUICCIARDINI. 1525. (?)

*British Museum.*











**FAENZA.**

FIG. 13.—CHRIST IN THE TOMB. CASA PIROTTA.  
MARK, A CROSS OVER TWO CONCENTRIC  
CIRCLES.

*British Museum.*







**FAENZA.**

FIG. 14.—DISH. THE HOLY FAMILY, AFTER  
MICHAEL ANGELO, MARKED WITH A  
CROSS. CASA PIROTTA, C. 1525.

*British Museum.*





usually one of those which a connoisseur selects at a glance as worthy of special attention.

Baldassare Manara is better known as a painter than as a manufacturer. He came from the old stock of Faenza *figuli*. After his death his works passed at first into the possession of his eldest son Giuliano, and subsequently into that of his grandson, also named Baldassare Manara. Now, if this latter has chosen, as seems probable, to adopt as his mark the initials B.M. previously used by his grandfather, we understand the perplexity to which those collectors were reduced who persisted in attributing to the same artist the work of two distinct men. And this is how they got out of their embarrassment. It was decided that Baldassare Manara had two manners—the work of the first period being remarkable for a great accuracy of design and highly finished treatment, while in the second period these qualities had totally disappeared, and one can see that the love of art had been sacrificed to commercial considerations. It is time that the paintings of the two Baldassares should be considered separately; they have nothing in common but the mark. As a matter of fact, the elder Manara was dead before 1540, as appears from a deed of that date, adduced by Argnani, which bears the signature of the sons of the *late* Baldassare Manara.

He had been one of the first to introduce at Faenza the idea of embellishing the majolica with copies from good engravings, to the detriment of the more decorative schemes of ornament that had prevailed before him. The extreme care—one might say the real talent—with which he executed these copies won for him a great name as a painter. A *tazza* now in the Bologna Museum, decorated with the figures of Aurora and two of the Hours leading the horses of the sun, belongs to him unquestionably. It is lusted with metallic lustres, and is singular in bearing, conjointly with the letters B.M., the inscription, "M.G. (Maestro Giorgio) da Ugubio:" the latter being doubtless responsible for the application of the lustres. The admirable dish of the Fortnum collection, on which is represented "The Triumph of Father Time," gives

a good idea of the style of the elder Manara and the perfection he brought to the execution of his painting. On the other hand, the interesting plaque in the British Museum which has the equestrian portrait of Battista Castellini de Faenza, standard-bearer to the Duke d'Este (1542), inscribed in full, "BALDASARA MANARA FAENTINUS FACIEBAT," as well as a dish with the Parnassus of Raffaella, both so palpably inferior in treatment that they had to be ascribed to the artist's second manner, should be attributed to his namesake. In the same way the valuable document quoted by Campori which refers to the payment of a sum of money to "Baldasare da Faenza" on account of the price of "*Vasi de majolica per la Spezeria dell' Isola, villegiatura de D. Alfonso (D'Este)*," should be taken as concerning Baldasare the younger. Its date, 1574, makes it more than thirty years later than the death of the elder master.

The importance of another factory, that of VIRGILIO, or Virgiliotto da Faenza, was brought into notice by a passage of Piccolpasso's MS., in which the discovery of a beautiful red, obtained by a preparation of the Armenian bole, was credited to that potter. A dish in the British Museum, painted with the subject of Apollo and Marsyas, bears on the reverse the inscription: "FATTO IN LA BOTTEGA DE MAESTRO VERGILIO DA FAENZA, 1556. NICOLO DA FANO." To this last-named artist, who is not to be confounded with Nicolò da Urbino, some fine work is attributed. Malagola adds to the list of the Faenza factories that of Il Monte, of which a plate in the Pasolini Museum, inscribed "FATE IN MONTE," is the only example known. By other writers the place is said to have been an offshoot of Cafaggiolo, the well-known trident of that factory being included in the mark; it is also claimed as belonging to Montelupo.

From a privilege granted in 1552 to Mo. Tomaso Scaldamazza, *ex Faenzia figulus vasorum*, we hear that he was then transferring to Mantua the business he had so far carried on in the town. None of his work has ever been identified.

PLATE VII.

FAENZA.

The Arms of Francesco Guicciardini, the Historian of  
Florence.

Casa Pirotta, 1525. Berettino Decoration.

*British Museum.*













**FAENZA.**

FIG. 15.—THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, AFTER  
LUCAS VAN LEYDEN.

FIG. 16.—THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, AFTER  
RAFFAELLE.

*Hanley Museum*



During the seventeenth century the ceramic industry, in its full decline, was still represented by the works of Francesco Vicchi, who, according to a private letter, dated 1633, addressed to the Duke of Modena, had the best *botega* in the town, and was a better painter than any of the others; and by that of Tonducci Grossi. This last factory, said to have been the continuation of the one once flourishing at The Monte, passed in 1693 into the hands of Conte Ferniani. It was still in the possession of his descendants in 1880.

To these names may be added those of Benini and Ragazzini, 1777, and Montanari, 1779. At that period the old style of manufacture had long been abandoned. It was revived about sixty years ago, when the advent of the collecting fever created a demand for more or less accurate reproductions of the old types, which found a ready sale in the curiosity-market as genuine specimens.

Besides the better-known names recorded above, Argnani gives those of twenty-one majolica factories of greater or less importance which, during a corresponding period, were at work in the town.

Nowhere else in Italy was there ever congregated on the same spot such a multitude of masters and highly-skilled operatives as could be found in Faenza at the time when the manufacture of majolica was at its best. Yet, as the minor works followed in the track of the leading ones, the aggregate of the products retained a general character that one can recognise at a glance. The production must have been considerable. All the various modes of majolica decoration—such, at least, as are consistent with the Renaissance style—were practised, if not invented, in Faenza, with the exception of the metallic lustres, a process which was never attempted there. I shall not dwell upon the *mezza-majolica*, whether the term implies the popular crocks with an “engobe” of fine white clay rudely painted with green and purple, or the more elaborate and pretentious pieces of “*sgraffito*,” which may have anticipated the painting of figure subjects on the white ware; I have already said that they should not be studied



under the heading of Majolica. We must come at once to the typical ware so forcibly exemplified in the disc, bearing the Y.H.S. monogram and the date 1475, preserved in the Cluny Museum. It cannot be said that this is the earliest specimen of the kind, yet without it we could not have an exact knowledge of the improved state of manufacture reached at this period. It is already majolica in its most complete expression. In it we find the two explicit criteria through which the genuine Faenza ware may be recognised either in its later or its earlier manifestations. They consist, artistically, in a decided predilection for a severe style of ornament: materially, in the presence of an incomparably powerful palette of colours in which blackish blue and dark yellow greatly predominate. In the Cluny disc of 1475 the palette is about complete already, and we see that the painters were past masters in the use they could make of these colours. The depth of the tints has not been approached anywhere else except in Cafaggiolo; and in this case we shall see, later on, how the similarity can easily be accounted for. Huge pitchers, Albarelli, or drug-pots, and other vessels for household use, decorated in plain blackish blue and often bearing a short inscription in Gothic letters, may be assigned to the same period. Combining with the dark blues and yellows lighter shades of yellow and blue, and also bright greens and subdued purples, the majolist painted an infinite variety of diapers, ornate bands, compartments, etc., in which fish scales and peacock feathers played a conspicuous part. Sometimes a small figure or a profile is introduced in the centre of the design; in the earliest examples these are shaded in blue. A process which seems to have originated in the Casa Pirotta—where, at any rate, they made extensive use of it—is the one called *BERETTINO*. It consisted in covering a portion or the whole of the piece with a coat of opaque enamel slightly tinted blue. On this ground, arabesques or interlacings were delicately traced in raised white and darker blue. When the applied ornamentation showed but little more whiteness than the tinted white of the ground the process was called *sopra bianco*. In the same manner, bands of dark or

bright yellow received intricate patterns of contrasting colours. When elaborate figure subjects, reproduced from Italian or German masters, came into fashion under the name of *Istories*, they were generally framed in very rich ornamental borders. The design, formed of "grotesques" in a good style, was reserved in the deep blue or dark yellow ground and ultimately painted in polychrome. In borders of this kind we notice that a regular feature was made of a pyriform mask, the inferior part of which terminates in acanthus leaves; the presence of this mask is often considered as a certificate of origin. The reverse of a dish is generally decorated with concentric circles, fish scales, or roughly traced scrolls. As a rule the ware is lighter and better made than that which comes from other centres.

A knowledge of the general characteristics of the Faenza ware is of little assistance as a means of settling the enigmas presented by some troublesome case of identification. Experience has taught us that certain pieces showing the typical features of those made in Faenza may have quite a different provenance. It must not be forgotten that many clever Faentine operatives who had left their native town to seek their fortune in distant places—and we shall find their traces in all directions within the course of this narrative—continued to work for their new masters in the very style they had learnt in the workshops where they had acquired their training. Nor can we depend on the guidance of the numerous marks which—with the exception of the highly instructive ones containing a name inscribed in full—have all remained unexplained. In the greater number of instances the attribution must remain a matter of faith; it is not one of certainty.

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## FORLI

On the faith of Passeri's statement that the trade of pot-making was imported into Pesaro by one Pedrini di Giovanni, *a bocalibus* of Forli, in 1396—which might imply that the trade had been practised in the last-named town at a much earlier period—French writers have placed Forli on an equal rank with the towns which claim to have been the cradle of majolica manufacture. At that time the study was still passing through its incipient phases. Nothing has since come to light that would give any importance to a record which, no doubt, has reference to the establishment of some common pot-works. Yet several pieces, of undetermined provenance, have been pointed out as representing the majolica made at Forli when the art was in its earliest stages. In no case, however, does the attribution rest upon anything more definite than impulsive speculations or the fruitless comparison of a given specimen with another of equally problematic origin. But as these fantastic attributions have made their way in the world, being copied from one book to another, they cannot be altogether ignored. If they are mentioned here, however, it must be as a caution against rash judgments.

Can we, for instance, implicitly accept the heart-shaped wall-plaque in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 2591'56, which bears the arms of the Ordelaffi, lords of Forli towards 1490, as having been made at Forli; or the plaque in the





**FORLI (?)**.

FIG. 17.—VASE DECORATED IN POLYCHROME.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





**FORLÌ.**

FIG. 18.—CHRIST AMONG THE DOCTORS. SIGNED  
M<sup>o</sup> IRO (NIMO.) DA FORLÌ.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





same Museum, No. 490'64, representing the Virgin and Child, the drawing of which has been gratuitously attributed to Melozzo da Forli? The technical merits of both plaques indicate a very advanced state of manufacture. Never has a line of documentary evidence disclosed the fact that a factory capable of producing such good work existed at Forli at such an early date. The painting shows the use of the flowing blue and the rich dark yellow peculiar to the Faentine ware. We cannot help remembering that Faenza, a prolific centre which was already sending its artistic productions all over Italy, was situated only a short distance from Forli. The Ordelaffi plaque may have been made in the neighbouring town. If we consider the ware itself and its characteristic Faentine treatment, to deny the possibility of such an origin would be, to say the least, imprudent.

There is no lack of fully authenticated examples of Forli's productions, but they all belong to a much more recent epoch. One may mention as the earliest-dated piece the dish in the Louvre Museum, which has a copy of the "Massacre of the Innocents," after Baccio Bandinelli, and is inscribed: "FATA IN FORLI, 1542." Another dish, in the Ravenna Museum, decorated with figures and landscapes, has the same inscription, with the date 1545. The dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum, painted with the subject of "Christ among the Doctors," and inscribed: "I(N) LA BOTEGA D. MO. IRO(NIMO) DA FORLI" (Fig. 17), is also a perfectly representative example of the Forli majolica at its best moment. Whether Jeronimo was the manufacturer or the painter of the dish has never been ascertained.

The name of one of the local artists, Leocadio Solombrino, has been handed down to us by a dish once in the Delsette collection. It bears a copy of the Nuptials of Alexander, after Raffaello, and the inscription: "LEOCHADIUS SOLÖBRINUS PICSIT FOROLIVIVM ECE MDLV." Several other works have been recognised as painted by the same hand. All the above examples strike us as obvious imitations of the Faenza style, and no original feature is to be distinguished in them. The

output of the Forli factories was not inconsiderable, and through what we know of it the competition that it created against Faenza, then entering on its decline, is plainly established.

The documentary evidence so far produced by local historians is limited to an act of the Municipality of Forli, dated 1549, granting to the potters of Faenza the licence of importing their ware into the town on payment of a small tax devoted to the repair of the town-hall clock; in return Forli is allowed to sell its pottery, free of duty, on the Faenza market. We may gather from this friendly agreement that the competition existing between the trade of the two neighbouring towns was not fierce enough to excite enmity. It was with full consciousness of its inferiority that the follower looked to its leader. Paolo Bonoli, who wrote in 1661, says: "*The majolica made in the town, if not so perfect as that which comes from Faenza, is nevertheless of great utility and not to be despised; it gives employment to many youths working under the guidance of experienced masters.*"

### RIMINI

As far back in the past as at any other centre we can find traces of earthenware pottery with an attempt at painted decoration having been made at Rimini. Fragments of jugs of white ware glazed with lead have been exhumed from several parts of the city. The presence of monograms and heraldic devices relating to the Malatesta lord of Rimini between 1416 and 1429, testify to their local origin. The specimens do not differ much from those discovered in other places. Some pieces attributed to the same period, now in private hands, are said to be glazed with stanniferous enamel. True majolica was made at the time of Piccolpasso, who mentions the Rimini factory among those which were in a prosperous condition in his time.

A plate in the Cluny Museum, with the subject of Adam and Eve, is inscribed: "IN RIMINO, 1535." This is the



year in which an exceptional service appears to have been painted, one dish of which, with the "Fall of Phaeton," is in the British Museum. Other pieces of the service, all bearing the same date, are scattered in foreign collections. If the style of painting is to be particularised, one might say that it affects uncommon harshness in the contrast of colours, and a rather hasty and careless treatment. The glazing is remarkably pure and glossy. The *brocca* in the Bologna Museum is of a later period. It represents a scene in the history of Scilla, and is inscribed: "GIVLIO DA VRBINO IN BOTTEGA DI MO. ALESSANDRO IN ARIMIN." The same artist is mentioned by Vasari as having gone from Urbino to Ferrara. His passage through these places may be taken as an example of the wandering propensities of the majolist.

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#### RAVENNA

A tazza in the Sèvres Museum, on which the figure of Arion is represented standing on a dolphin and playing the viol. is the unique example bearing on the reverse the word RAVENA, and on this authority it may be fairly ascribed to that antique city. The subject is painted in a darker blue on a light *Berettino* glaze by a rather skilful hand; foliated scrolls, in the style sometimes called a *porcellana*, run round all over the broad border. Unfortunately, neither date nor name of maker is there to emphasise the documentary interest of this rare specimen. Piccolpasso mentions the potters of the place as using to great advantage the muddy deposits of the river for the making of their pottery. One name appears in the civic registers in connection with the trade: it is that of one Pier Frutarnol, *maiolicaro di Ravenna*, to whom a privilege is granted for exporting goods to the Levant. In the absence of such wasters and fragments as excavations have brought to light in other centres, and which have

proved so valuable for the identification of local productions, we cannot form an idea what were the characteristics of the Ravenna ware. That it did not compare favourably with that which the Faentini were "dumping" on the market may be inferred from the fact that, in 1522, the *figoli*, or potters, obtained from the magistrates a decree prohibiting the introduction and the sale of Faenza pottery in the town except on the occasion of the fairs.

### BOLOGNA

The existence of some pot-works in Bologna is established by the authentic records discovered in the archives by C. Malagola. Not a single specimen by which these records could be illustrated has ever come to hand. If true majolica was manufactured at all, it must have been at a late period and not in sufficient quantity to satisfy the requirements of the town. We read in Leandro Alberti's *Descrizione di tutta Italia, Bologna*, 1550, that "the Faentini were realising enormous sums of money from the considerable consignments of pottery they were wont to bring into the market."

Our budget of information being limited to a few local documents, we shall transcribe here the dates of them without further comment:—

1312.—Statutes of the Corporation of the *Magistrorum artis Urceorum*.

1549.—Alexandro di Francesco Begnamini and two other townsmen are qualified as *Bocalari* in the registers.

1574.—Death of Antonio, *quondam Pauli de Millionibus, figuli*.

1595.—Privilege granted to Angelo Michele Risio and his two partners to establish in Bologna a factory of pottery *ex argilla ad instar faentinorum maiolica appellata*.

I do not mean to load this list with the names of the unimportant factories started in the town in the course of the last two centuries. An account of their vicissitudes would be of no interest in the history of majolica.

## IMOLA

In 1543, Giovanni Maria Raccagnia di Faenza, *detto Taffarino*, obtained not only an exclusive privilege for the manufacture of majolica, but also a decree that the introduction of the Faenza ware should be prohibited in the town of Imola. The statutes of the potter's trade were enacted in 1586. It may be seen that nothing has emerged from the production of these authentic documents but the vain name of another factory. No piece of Imola manufacture has so far been properly identified. It was, however, well known at one time. We hear of a privilege being granted to one Gio. Andrea Ferrari for the making, in the province of Ferrara, of a ware "similar to that made at Imola."



## II

### TUSCANY

FLORENCE—CAFAGGIOLO AND GAGLIANO—MONTE LUPO AND  
SAN MINIATELLO—PISA AND CASTEL FIORENTINO—ASCIANO  
—SIENA AND SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA

#### FLORENCE

WITH the name of the most glorious of all Tuscan cities is associated the recollection of two momentous achievements inscribed in red letters in the annals of the ceramic art. As early as the second quarter of the fifteenth century—while nothing better than rude earthen vessels was being produced around him—a Florentine sculptor, Luca della Robbia, was evolving plastic marvels out of enamelled clay; by the touch of his genius he had virtually glorified humble terra-cotta, making of it a material equal in value in the eye of the artist to precious marble and bronze. Later on, at a moment when the protracted but fruitless researches of the alchemist and the potter had almost extinguished all hopes of ever discovering the secret of the white and translucid ware imported from the Far East, amazing white vases began to come from the mysterious workshop in the Casino di San Marco, where Duke Francesco de Medici pressed and turned the clay with his own hands. If not made precisely of the same substance as the originals, the vases were, at any rate, excellent substitutes for the foreign articles they purported to equal. The complex mixture of which they were formed was in after times to serve as a basis for the composition of the finest pastes of European porcelain. I must refrain, unfor-

tunately, from dwelling upon these two pregnant subjects. As I have stated previously, the strict limitations of this work do not admit of the introduction of any collateral matter, but I shall give hereafter a complete list of the works to be consulted. It is with painted majolica alone that I have dealt and that I mean to deal.

It has always been considered as doubtful whether true majolica was ever regularly manufactured in Florence proper. The wealthy inhabitants of the town patronised, as a fancy, the golden-lustred ware that came from Majorca, but greatly preferred, for daily use, the neat and strong pewter, brass, or silver vessel to the heavy and brittle earthen pot. These latter, largely used by the lower classes, were supplied by the rural pot-works, plying a busy trade, in Cancelli, Montelupo, San Miniato, and other neighbouring villages. The firing of a potter's kiln in the centre of a great city was in all countries objected to on account of the danger to which it exposed the whole quarter. It would appear that in Florence the pot-works were likewise banished to the outskirts.

The late Comm. Milanese, and after him G. Guasti in his book on Cafaggiolo, have attempted to upset all the notions so far accepted. According to these writers, Luca della Robbia would have had generations of predecessors in Florence who had made regular use of stanniferous enamel from the thirteenth century. This has still, however, to be conclusively established. In the various quotations from ancient documents put before us to support these startling views we look in vain for a passage that could be applied to the making of enamelled ware at such a remote period, unless we are prepared to resort to the assistance of conjectural interpretation. From the examination of ambiguous texts we may certainly obtain once more the confirmation of our belief that in every spot which had become the permanent settlement of an active and industrious population, the indispensable terra-cotta and rudimentary pottery were among the earliest productions and continued to be made for centuries without any appreciable modifications. But, when engaged in the study of a particular



centre, what is of paramount interest for us to ascertain is the approximate epoch at which improvements were introduced, transforming humdrum handiwork into a perfectible art. I regret to say that in the present case the Florentine documents throw no light on the early use of the stanniferous enamel.

We hear that the *Vasaii* were members of the *arte maggiori*—the higher arts—which comprised the physicians, druggists, painters, and professional men in general. But before we take this piece of information at its exact value a distinction has evidently to be made between the various classes of men who belonged to the craft, whether they be *figoli*, *orcellari*, *vasaii*, *bochellari*, *maiolicari*, or what not. We understand that the talented majolist, who, commissioned by mighty princes, embellished with the work of his hand exceptional services of sumptuous vessels, or the influential city merchant whose emporium in the main street offered a costly display of painted ware, could both claim affinity with the other masters of the liberal arts. But we may also surmise that in so select a company there was no room for the working master potter, and his wretched mate the clay toiler, who, in his roadside shanty, lived in all likelihood the life of a pariah. Of the social conditions under which almost the whole of the craft existed and laboured we know absolutely nothing.

Were we to adopt the infatuated views put forward by the self-appointed champions of Florentine ceramics, we should have to abjure all former creeds and assign to the factories of Florence all the classical specimens of early majolica which, through judicious comparison with dated and inscribed standard pieces, are now regarded by general assent as belonging to Faenza. So long as the supposed existence of a factory in the town has not been attested by conclusive evidence—and for the present not even the probable site of it has been suggested—one may be excused for declining to accept purely hypothetical attributions. The occasional discovery of fragments of cast-away domestic vessels buried here and there in the soil cannot be adduced as evidence of local



manufacture, the great quantity of crocks known to have been daily brought into the market by the suburban potters being sufficient to account for the presence of such fragments. Until further investigations have advanced the study of the question, the problematic Florentine majolica had perhaps better be left alone. A city which can boast of having given birth to the enamelled terra-cotta of the Della Robbias and the Medicean porcelain may dispense from claiming minor glories.

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## CAFAGGIOLO

For a time it seemed as though we should have to strike off the time-honoured name of Cafaggiolo from the list of the majolica factories. This is not the only case in which a train of specious arguments has imparted a semblance of materiality to the phantasm of captivating visions. Actuated by a strange delusion, C. Malagoli took upon himself the task of demonstrating, in his *Memorie sulle Maioliche di Faenza*, that Cafaggiolo, as a producing centre, never existed. His conclusions were warmly espoused and defended against all comers by Prof. Argnani. It must be said, as an attenuation of their otherwise inexcusable blunder, that the ware so far attributed to Cafaggiolo bore an extraordinary likeness to the best authenticated examples of Faentine manufacture; the hasty conclusion that specimens of so similar a character could come only from one unique source, gave rise to their ill-grounded theory. First, they called attention to the fact that neither Vasari nor Piccolpasso had mentioned such a factory, which they would not have failed to do if anything about it had been known in their time. Fragments marked with the monogram P and S, assigned to Cafaggiolo, had been found in the excavations made in Faenza, mixed with other *débris*. In the very inscriptions which had revealed the existence of the factory—FATO IN CHAFFAGGUOLO....CAFAGIOLO, or other forms of spelling—they found the mainstay of their far-fetched speculations. Ransacking the public archives, they had discovered that the Faxioli, or Fagioli, were counted among the most notable inhabitants of Faenza. A few of these Faxioli were connected with the staple trade of the town, and one of them may have been established there as a master potter.(?) If so, it was quite natural to assume that his products were marked with his name. Accordingly it was proposed that, as we take “CA’ PIROTO” as standing for Casa Pirotta, the chief factory of the place, we should construe the contested inscription into “CA’ FAGIOLO,” or “made in Casa Fagiolo.” Were it not, as I have just said, for the Faentine

PLATE VIII.

CAFAGGIOLO. (?)

Plate with a Border in "Sopra-bianco."

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











PLATE IX.

CAFAGGIOLO.

Judith holding the Head of Holophernes.

*Salting Collection.*









character of the ware, such irrational construction could never have won a moment's attention. As it stood, however, many partisans gathered around it. It would be idle, now that all misconception is at an end, to re-open the controversy. After the publication of G. Guasti's volume, and the production of unimpeachable evidence of the short but prosperous career of the Cafaggiolo factory, an ingenious scaffolding of illusory inferences resting on erroneous deductions, fell bodily to the ground.

On the road to Bologna, at about twelve miles from Florence, a huge stone pile, half fortress, half prison, raises its frowning front in the verdant scenery of its delightful surroundings. It is the villa of Cafaggiolo. Cosimo de' Medici, the *pater patriæ*, who had made this his favourite residence, continued to enlarge and embellish it up to the time of his death, which occurred in 1464. The demesne passed, after him, into the possession of his nephew Lorenzo. In the title-deed of the property, drawn up in 1485, is entered the description of a house "used as a pot-works, rented by one Nani di Jura di Bartolo, who pays an annual sum of lire 16-12." Further traces of the potter Nani di Jura are lost, but we find the pot-works mentioned again in another deed, dated 1506, which speaks of "a house with a potter's oven, situated in the square of Cafaggiolo, tenanted by Pietro e Stephano di Philipo de Montelupo." To these latter we shall anon have to return. In 1498, Cafaggiolo had passed into the hands of the brothers Lorenzo and Giovanni de' Medici.

Guasti quotes from a letter addressed by Lorenzo Pierfrancesco de' Medici to some nobleman of Siena asking for a supply of "the white clay used by the Genoese potters with which to coat the vases before they are dry." This document is of double importance; first as testifying to the interest the prince took in the improvement of pottery manufacture, and next as showing that the use of stanniferous enamel was not yet in question, for the request has a direct reference to the making of mezza-majolica. Whether it was Lorenzo himself or his son Pierfrancesco who transferred to Cafaggiolo

the site of their experiments, and there began to produce the true majolica ware, has not yet been made quite clear. The above-named writer estimates that the change took place about 1498; not later, at all events, than the third year of the sixteenth century.

Pierfrancesco was then recklessly squandering his patrimony. The perusal of the old Florentine chronicles has made us familiar with the stately and ostentatious life a *magnifico* led in his town and country palaces. All that Tuscany possessed of inspired and talented men, of cultured and beauteous women, gathered in turn at Cafaggiolo when Lorenzo or Pierfrancesco held their court at the castle—ideal galaxies in which art and poetry, in their vernal days, were budding out under vivifying influences; the glory of Italian sunshine, the munificence of a generous prince, and the encouraging smile of beauty. Started in the midst of such environment, could a well-directed attempt to produce a truly superior pottery have resulted in anything that was not of the highest excellence?

I have already mentioned the old record referring to a pot-works standing on the Cafaggiolo "piazza" in 1506. No other document is available through which it could be established that some relation, as between patron and retainer, connected the noble landlords and their tenants. The patronage that the Medici extended to the potters is, however, taken for granted; everything considered, one sees no cause to doubt it. The keen solicitude with which they fostered the arts and trades of their country and the partiality they evinced for richly decorated pottery, render it probable. The very character of the productions of the Cafaggiolo *ateliers* leads us to believe that it was a liberally subsidised institution rather than a private enterprise. It would not be fair to obtrude the remembrance of a few marked examples of an inferior order. They belong to the latest period when the potters, having lost the support of their patrons as well as the services of their best artists, attempted to continue the manufacture. A sad end indeed; but it casts no reflection on the glory of the beginning.





**CAFAGGIOLO.**

FIG. 19. —DRUG-POT WITH A SHIELD OF ARMS AND  
PEACOCK FEATHERS IN THE DECORATION.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





**CAFAGGIOLO.**

FIG. 20.—A MAJOLIST PAINTING A PLATE. SUBJECT  
IN POLYCHROME ON A BLUE GROUND.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





No doubt it was to gratify the wish of an enlightened and generous patron that one of the best majolists who ever painted the white ware resolved to come and settle on the square of Cafaggiolo Castle, assisted by a group of experienced craftsmen. Whence he came may be easily imagined. It was obviously from Faenza that he brought the secrets and the practice of an art which was being carried on there in all its splendour. We recognise on his work at Cafaggiolo the dark and flowing blue so pure in its lightest shades, the semi-opaque and intense orange-yellow, the mystery of which was soon to be lost, and the other colours he had learned to make and use during the days of his training. Nor did he as a designer produce much alteration in his choice of ornamental motives. They consist of the usual bands of running scrolls and delicate arabesques and of the geometrical compartments filled in with fish scales and peacock feathers, which had long before done duty at Faenza. What may be pointed out as distinctive of the Cafaggiolo ware is a masterly treatment, an exquisite finish of the painting, seldom found in that of the Emilian town. The imperfect piece, the cheap article made for commerce, are not represented in the group of specimens that has been formed of the unmistakable products of the Tuscan factory. There the painter aspires to be more than a copyist, and, neglecting the reproduction of popular engravings, indulges, on occasion, in some original design of his own. Of this kind is the uncommon plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 18), representing a majolist in elegant costume holding in his left hand a plate he is in the act of decorating; his colours and brushes neatly arranged on a stool by his side. A young nobleman and his lady are intently watching the artist. A stretch of imagination may induce us to fancy that in the youthful couple we have the presentments of Pierfrancesco de' Medici and Maria Soderini, owners of the castle and protectors of the potters, married in 1511. The plate bears the monogram formed of a P and an S crossed with a stroke at the inferior part, often seen added to the complete inscription "FATO IN CAFAGGILO." This

monogram may have been the mark adopted by Pietro and Stephano di Filippo da Montelupo, the tenants of the works on the "Piazza" named in the title-deed of 1506; it contains the initial letters of their names. The trident or other letters also seen in connection with the capital P remain unexplained.

Two dishes, one of them bearing an unknown coat of arms but showing the deep red colour considered as a sure indication of origin, and another having the inscription "S.P.Q.F." (*"Senatus populus que Florentinus"*), are dated respectively 1507 and 1509. They are the oldest examples so far identified.

A private letter, communicated by C. Milanesi, discloses for the first time how directly the Medici were concerned with the potters and their works. It is addressed to Francesco di Empoli, minister of Francesco de' Medici at Florence, by I. F. Zeffi, chamberlain to Pierfrancesco and Lorenzo, residing in Cafaggiolo, where he acted as superintendent of the works. It runs as follows:—

"With this you will get my letter to Antonio di Bernardo de' Medici; be sure that he has it. I also send the two covered basins he has asked me to have made for him. The single covered basin is for Marcantonio Ghondi, and the four smaller vases are sent to Giovanmaria by Lorenzo, *our patron*; make sure that each gets his own.—26 of December, 1521. In Cafaggiolo.—I. F. ZEFFI."

Guasti also gives the transcript of a few other letters, directed to the same Francesco di Empoli, all referring to the sending of ware. One of them, signed "Isteffano di Filippo, Istovigliaio in Chafaggulo" (*sic*), and dated 1522, shows that the practical management of the works was still in the same hands. The Filippo, or Filippo, family was largely represented at Cafaggiolo. The census of the town taken in 1534 contains the names of six brothers and sons of Stefano di Filippo, all of them working potters. Another letter, written in the same year by one Jacopo Fattore, of Cafaggiolo, inquires from the Minister "whether the vessels he has ordered for him-





**CAFAGGILO (?).**

FIG. 21.—CUPID FALLING. ARABESQUES IN POLY-  
CHROME ON DARK BLUE GROUND.  
MARKED WITH A STAR.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





CAFAGGIOLO.

FIG. 22.—FRAGMENT OF A DISH. FROM THE  
CASTELLANI COLLECTION.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





self and a friend are to be painted with arms or other devices, or whether he wants them to be white with blue flowers, in the ordinary way."

Although the list is not a very long one, I cannot undertake to enumerate the specimens attributed, or attributable, to the Tuscan works. It may be expected, however, that I should mention a few of those which offer particular interest. As historical documents they are rather disappointing. The arms of the Medici only appear in very few instances. We see them on the remarkable dish of the Victoria and Albert Museum, painted with a religious procession, in which Pope Leo X. is the conspicuous figure. Another large dish, in the British Museum, with the subject of Abel's sacrifice, bears the motto of Giuliano de' Medici, GLOVIS, which, read backwards, makes SI VOLG; that is to say, "If it (the wheel of fortune) turns." The motto, modified into SEMP(R)E GLOVI, is inscribed upon a huge platter of rather coarse execution, having in the centre a medallion of Nero, with the arms and papal tiara of Leo X. introduced into the ornamental border. This is in the Cluny Museum. One plate, figured by Delange, with a subject of Diana and Endymion, of which Botticelli is supposed to have supplied the design; and another, in the Basilewsky collection, with the "Flagellation," after Albrecht Dürer, may be considered as typical examples of the art of the Cafaggiolo painters. But of still superior merit, from the noble style of the drawing, as well as for the brilliance and harmony of the colour scheme, is the plate of the Salting collection we reproduce on Pl. IX. It represents two female figures seated on horses running at full gallop. It is Judith, holding at arm's length the head of Holofernes, accompanied by her servant. On the reverse of the piece we read: JAP<sup>o</sup> IN CHAFAGGVLO. The inscription is surmounted by the usual monogram, and accompanied by the trident, perhaps the personal mark of Jacopo, the painter. The artistic value of a masterpiece cannot be enhanced by the sum it has fetched in the auction-room, yet I believe that the information that this rare specimen fetched over £2,000 at the Spitzer sale

will warm up the enthusiasm of many an, otherwise, cool admirer.

Returning to the historical record; after 1522 we hear no more about the works and their vicissitudes. Years elapse, during which their unstable prosperity must have been gradually on the wane. In 1568, under unexplained circumstances, the Medici appear to have withdrawn their patronage. In that year, Prince Francesco, wanting to order a large service of fine majolica, applied to one M<sup>o</sup>. Lionardo, decto Don Pino de Faenza, who delivered to him 307 choice pieces, for which the sum of £285 16s. 8d. was paid. Francesco I., second Grand Duke of Tuscany, had lost none of the interest he took in pottery manufacture, for it was to his personal researches that we owe the production of the first porcelain made in Europe, in 1574. It is not probable that, failing the support of the Medici, high-class work was long carried on. Yet, one plate mentioned by Delange bears the inscription: FATO IN CHAFAGGIOLO Adj 21 di Junio, 1570. This is the latest date on record.

A unique specimen, painted with the subject of Mucius Scævola holding his fist over the brazier, bears, in addition to the usual Cafaggiolo mark (the letter G), the words IN GAGLIANO NELL 1547, and the initials A.F. It is in the Fortnum collection. Another dish, in the Cluny Museum, on which is represented the Rape of Helen, shows an equally rare mark which unites the tridents, often found on pieces of Faenza or Cafaggiolo origin, and the inscription: FATO IN MONTE. On this testimony the probable existence of two majolica factories, to which no reference has ever been found in contemporary writings, has been accepted. The village and castle of Gagliano, once the seat of the Ubaldani family, are situated at a short distance from Florence; half-way stands the Villa del Monte. It has been suggested that when Giovanni di Stefano Fattorini separated from his brother Stefano da Philippo he must have settled at Gagliano, and begun to manufacture majolica in that place, from which he may, later on, have removed to Il Monte. Opinions differ as





**CAFAGGIOLO.**

FIG. 23.—BOWL WITH THE ARMS OF THE  
MEDICIS, MADE FOR LEO X. (1513-1521)  
OR CLEMENT VII. (1523-1534). WITH  
THE ARMS OF THREE ALLIED FAMILIES,  
STROZZI, ORSINI, AND SALVIATI.

*British Museum.*





**CAFAGGIOLO.**

FIG. 24.—PLATE WITH A FIGURE OF ST. GEORGE.  
A REMINISCENCE OF THE STATUE BY  
DONATELLO IN FLORENCE.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**CAFAGGIOLO.**

FIG. 25. --JUG WITH ARMS OF THE ALESSANDRO  
DEGLI ALESSANDRI FAMILY. MARKED  
WITH AN S.

*Ashmolean Museum.*





to this last locality. According to some writers it is a street in Faenza; in the estimation of others, the abbreviated name stands for Montelupo, or Montefelte.

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#### MONTELUPO AND SAN MINIATELLO

In Montelupo and San Miniato they were too busy, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, fashioning and burning common pottery to think of painting fine majolica. On these two producing centres devolved the trade of supplying Florence and other Tuscan towns with popular crockery. We may imagine the heavy cartloads of cheap earthen vessels which were sent out every day to be sold on the market-places of the big cities. A steady trade of no mean importance can only account for the number of *orciolari*, or common potters, permanently settled in Montelupo. The local documents that refer to members of the craft are many, and go as far back as the fourteenth century. Statutes for the regulation of the trade were prepared and sanctioned by the High Council of Florence, in 1511. Drinking-jugs of *mezza-majolica*, adorned with a big star, or a huge fleur-de-lys, were possibly the chief articles of manufacture. This is, however, a mere conjecture. Not a single pitcher of unquestionable attribution, not a handful of fragments dug from the soil, has ever turned up to enlighten us as to the exact nature of the ware of the early period.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a majolica of

inferior description made its appearance. It is represented by a few odd specimens which, although manifesting the exceptional character of presentation pieces, are of such hasty and rude treatment as to give us a very poor idea of the rest. To the smaller of the two villages belongs unmistakably the dish inscribed: "*Se fece questo in la Bottecha di Bechone del Nano in Saminiatello. Chuesto Fato Aghostino di M o A di cinque di Gugnio, 1581.*" Montelupo may claim the small tazza on which we read: "*Diacinto di Montelupo. Raffalo Girolamo fecit M...TE—L...PO. 1639.*"

The comic jugs, or *boccali*, of Montelupo enjoyed at one time an unenviable notoriety. They owed their popularity to the coarse caricatures, humorous subjects, and mongrel verses they bore. Both subjects and verses became so free and vulgar that the magistrates had to interfere and prohibit the sale of such jugs. A small share of the Medicis' patronage was extended to the potters of Montelupo. We hear that they were entrusted by Cosimo II., in 1611, with the making of a tile pavement he sent to Marie de Medicis, Queen of France.

We are surprised to see G. Guasti, a writer who is not without pretensions to archæological knowledge, making up for the want of authenticated examples by referring, in his lengthy notice of Montelupo, to the imaginary vases he found described in a work of fiction that he seems to take for a text-book. It is a little volume entitled *I boccali di Montelupo*, by Dr. G. Botti; Florence, 1818, 12mo. It narrates how it happened that a treasure of ancient earthen vases was once discovered by the monks of Montelupo, buried in the garden of their convent. The vessels were worthy of admiration. They were supposed to date from the fourth century B.C. Each bore a mystic subject, painted in the brightest colours, and elucidated by Latin verses embodying some philosophical truth. A museum was formed of the discovery, and the fame of it spread far and wide. So great became the influx of visitors to the convent that, fearing that the peace of the friars might be endangered, the prior ordered the whole treasure to be broken and thrown away into the river. The story goes on



to follow the adventures of a youth who travelled for years in search of a manuscript in which a description of the vases and a transcript of the inscriptions had been entered. Found at last, the manuscript was communicated to the author of the book, who was so deeply impressed by the wisdom and doctrinal value of the ancient maxims that he resolved to publish them "for the edification of youth and old age." I need say no more. The little volume is nothing else but a tale for children, well intended as a Sunday-school prize book; excellent doubtless for purposes of moral education; but which has certainly nothing to do with ceramic history.

### PISA AND CASTEL FIORENTINO.

Pisa cannot take credit for the manufacture of a special class of majolica; no early record of the industry being carried on in the place has ever come to light. But, as I have already related in the Introduction, Pisa is the town where the custom of embedding decorative earthen basins in the outside walls of the churches originated, and it was in its port that the brisk commercial transactions of the Italian and Spanish merchants who traded in the exchange of the ornamental pottery made in their respective countries were centralised. It does not follow that the abundance of decorative basins or of other ceramic ware necessarily implies local production. But the discussions raised on this subject have fixed the attention of the historian upon Pisa.

Thus it was that we learn that, after the death of Francesco de' Medici, the making of porcelain was discontinued at Florence. Nicolo Sisto, also called the *Faenzino*, chief assistant in the Grand Duke's laboratory, was granted a loan of 500 ducats to prosecute the manufacture of porcelain and establish that of majolica, after the manner of Faenza, in the town of Pisa. The enterprise does not appear to have been a complete success. In the year 1619, Sisto was sued by the Treasury for the payment of 300 ducats still owing on the loan. He addressed a memoir to Cosimo II., in which he represented



that, by command of the late Duke, he had delivered numerous vases and services of fine majolica, much exceeding in value the sum that was asked from him, and for which he had received no consideration in return. He humbly prayed that his case should receive the gracious attention of his illustrious excellency, and that he might be discharged from further liability with respect to the loan. A note in the margin of the document directs that the supplicant should not be tormented until further order.

A large majolica vase, with serpent handles, ostentatiously decorated in the late Urbino style—once in the collection of Baron G. de Rothschild—shows the word PISA, written in large capitals within an oblong tablet. Another vase, of the same shape and size, but with chimeras in the handles, and which has the arms of Ferdinando de' Medici (the successor of Francesco), accompanied with a rich ornamentation, likewise in the Urbino style, seems to be the work of the same hand. This latter vase is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Both are considered, not without plausibility, as having come from the kiln of Nicolo Sisto, at Pisa.

Having scanned the public records of the village of Castel Fiorentino, in the Valdelsa, Guasti has met with the names of a few *orciolari* figuring in the census returns and other documents between 1487 and 1536. The mention of a two-handled vase of *graffito* ware, bearing the arms of the Siccardi, and the inscription "A di DIECI DI JENAIO, 1517, SE FECE," attributed to Castel Fiorentino by its owner, V. Funghini, completes the information we are given as to the existence of a very problematical factory.

#### SIENA AND SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA

For a long time Italian writers were agreed on the point that, whatever be the number of excellent specimens which, in the course of time, had drifted into the town from all sorts of places, majolica was never manufactured in Siena.

Independent researches, and particularly those of Mr. Langton-Douglas, have put another face on this matter. His notice of *Le maioliche di Siena* is only open to one slight criticism. A long residence in Siena may have, in some way, warped the rectitude of the author's views as to the priority of the Sienese pottery industry. Justly proud of bringing new materials to the history of majolica, Mr. Langton-Douglas seems to have fallen a prey to the weak partiality so regrettable in the methods of the Italian monographist, who, when pleading *pro domo sua*, presents the object of his solicitude as a central sun from which all other lights are but divergent rays. In the present case we are asked to consider Siena as the original basis on which Faenza, and indeed all other places of early manufacture, rested their foundation. I will leave the author responsible for the historical information summarised hereafter.

In the year 1262 the potting trade was developing so fast that by reason of the risks it created, the Podestà had to issue a decree forbidding, thenceforth, the firing of a potter's furnace within the walls of the city. Driven away into the suburbs, the *orciolari* remained, nevertheless, citizens of Siena; the names of thirty-three of them appear, in 1363, in the civic registers. In 1470, sixteen masters kept *bottegas* in Siena, as appears from their petition to the Signoria, in which they asked that the introduction and sale of all foreign pottery should be prohibited. The application was granted. A few years afterwards, we hear that a whole street was occupied by makers and sellers of pottery. To this period may belong the few fragments, of the *graffito* kind, roughly scratched in with simple designs and glazed in one or more colours, occasionally discovered in the excavations. They are fair examples of *mezza-majolica*; the makers made good use of that fine white clay found in the locality, which Passeri declares to be superior to that of Vicenza, for the superficial coating of the coarser material.

Painted majolica was produced towards the close of the fifteenth century. To this several tile pavements of early



date bear witness. The earliest one, made for the Oratorio di Santa Caterina in Fontebranda, was begun in 1480 and completed in 1504. Another, of which remains are still in existence, adorned the Bichi chapel in Sant' Agostino. This was the work of two native artists, Pietro and Niccolo di Lorenzo Mazzaburroni, who painted it in 1488. The celebrated pavement of the Palazzo di Pandolfo Petruccio, reproduced in the folio volumes of Brenci and Rotellini, was begun in 1509. Had Siena produced nothing more than these admirable pavements, its name would still deserve a place in the roll of the most prominent majolica factories. The possibility of this work having been executed in Faenza—as is the case with the Bologna and other pavements—cannot be entertained. It must be acknowledged, however, that the influence of Faenza, Castel-Durante, Gubbio, etc., is unmistakable. The painters who collaborated in the completion of this gigantic task had been trained in one or the other of these high schools of ceramic painting; each painter has confined his contribution to the general scheme to the introduction of unchanged reminiscences of the style he was wont to practise in former days. The result is an immense variety of detail, a richness of motives unparalleled in a work of such magnitude. But from a medley of designs and effects of colours which, taken separately, remind us of tastes and modes of treatment peculiar to other places, it is almost impossible to determine what could be the characteristics of the real Siennese style.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the prospects of the factories had improved sufficiently to attract to the town the Faentine majolists in search of employment. Among the names of the most notable craftsmen who settled in Siena in 1498 we find those of Evangelista di Michele, "*pictor rasorum*"; and his brother Tomasso G. Andrea Tonduzzi, also of Faenza, must have arrived at about the same time, for in 1526 his son Marc Antonio had become one of the influential masters, and was made a member of the commission appointed to prepare the new statutes of the trade.

From an inscribed dish, now in the Victoria and Albert





**SIENA.**

FIG. 26.—PLATE WITH THE CENTAUR NESSUS  
CARRYING OFF DEJANEIRA. BORDER ON  
ORANGE-YELLOW GROUND.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*



Museum, was derived the first intimation of the existence of a Sienese fabrication. It is painted in light blue with delicate Florentine scrolls and interlacings, of the style called a *porcellana*, heightened with *sopra bianco*. In the centre is a figure of Saint Jerome in the desert. On the reverse one reads the words "FATA Ī SIENA DA M<sup>o</sup>. BENEDETTO." Benedetto, whose name appears in the registers, was a son of Giorgio di Faenza. His *bottega* was situated on the Piazza di San Marco. In 1510 he was enrolled as one of the members of the benevolent Society of Santa Lucia. From his *bottega*—a word that I should take to mean decorating *atelier* and selling-shop rather than factory—much excellent work must have been issued, if it was all of similar quality to the dish just referred to. Several pieces, showing some analogy with it, are described by Drury Fortnum, who assigns to them a common origin. They are signed, either I.P. *Iacomo Pinsur*, or with the monogram F.O.I., and a variety of signatures which would indicate that several talented painters were employed in the same *atelier*. In all likelihood these pieces were parts of a special costly service executed for some church dignitary.

A curious inventory of the contents of the business premises of one Giovan Battista di Lucca, dated 1520, affords us an insight into the regular productions of a majolist of Siena. The list comprises about 150 pieces, such as *taglieri*, *albarelli*, *scodelli* and *tazzoni*, all well painted and finished; a large stock of "ambrogette," or ornamental tiles; also over 400 unfinished pieces; and finally, the colours, tools, and various appliances of manufacture.

When the sixteenth century was drawing to a close, the majolica trade in Siena had lost all its old activity; one, M<sup>o</sup>. Panduccio, a rector of the University, still appears, however, in a document dated 1565 as a master of the art. The celebrated pavement of Santa Caterina, which had fallen into decay, was entirely renovated in 1600 by Girolamo di Marco Gioschi, a *rasaio* from Pantaneto, a suburb of the town. The number of tiles painted for this purpose amounted to no less



than 3,071. They were tolerable copies, and the date inscribed on the originals was reproduced on them. Subsequently a great number of these copies fell into private hands, and may now be seen in the museums where they have found a resting-place.

Coming to the eighteenth century, we hear of one Ferdinando Mario Campani, an experienced majolica painter, making an attempt to revive the departed art in Siena. He decorated vases and dishes with copies of engravings after the old masters, painted in the loose style of his time. One dish in the Victoria and Albert, and another in the British Museum, bear the mark he had adopted, and the date 1733. Campani worked in several places. Contemporary writers, never chary of inflated compliments, refer to him as the Raffaele of Majolica.

Of Bernardino Pepi, a druggist of the town, and of his frank pretensions to be regarded as "the renovator of the ceramic art in Siena," I must say a few words, if it were only by way of warning to collectors. In partnership with two practical potters, he set up, in 1847, a small factory which, for about twenty years, supplied the curiosity shops with spurious "ambrogette" and sham "Della Robbia" virgins. Many specimens of this despicable industry have found their way into public and private collections, where they are classed as genuine representatives of the original ware.

At San Quirico d'Orcia, a castle situated in the Val Dorcia, on Siennese territory, a small factory is said to have been founded by Cardinal Flavio Chigi in 1714. The statement is incorrect in so far, at least, as it concerns the date, for the Cardinal died in 1693. His inheritance passed into the hands of the Chigi Zondadari. A memoir, preserved in the archives of that family, informs us that in 1693 Marchese Bonaventure had given directions that a potter's kiln, similar to those used at Pesaro, should be built and maintained at San Quirico, under the management of one Mariano Sticcoli, *vasaio* (*Guasti*). L. Magalotti, writing in 1695, alludes to the majolica factories of Siena, Centinale, and San Quirico, owned by



**SIENA.**

FIG. 27.—DISH BY F. M. CAMPANI, 1717.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





Marchese Chigi and his brothers. Nothing is known of the Centinale works, but in the villa of that name the state-rooms were, in 1719, still adorned with large dishes, artistically painted by F. Campani, and richly framed in gilt wood. As to the San Quirico factory, it stood outside the castle, in a small building which has retained its old name of the *Vaseria*. By 1705 it had become a private concern; for, in that year, lease and plants, tools and stock, were purchased, from the then manufacturer Luppaci, by Francesco Antonio Piergentili for the sum of Lira 1,019 13 9. To him, Bartolomeo Terchi, *Romano*, succeeded, as proprietor and manager. His work, heavily outlined and shaded with an opaque iron brown, is of a peculiar and unpleasant character. He retired from the business in 1724, leaving the affairs of the works in a deplorable state, and went to join his brother Antonio, a potter established at Bassano. The factory was still in activity in 1795. Marked examples of the ware may be seen in the British and the Victoria and Albert Museums. A most important collection of the San Quirico productions is in the possession of Marchese B. Chigi Zondadari, in Siena.

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#### ASCIANO

The operative potters were numerous at Asciano, and their trade may have been quite important when the statutes of the craft were drawn and approved in 1573; but whether they made anything better than common pottery is by no

means certain. The two fully-identified pieces that we possess could scarcely prove it. Indifferent as they be, they are pretentious enough to make us discard the idea that they represent the styles of a regular manufacture. One is an armorial dish, with a wreath of heavy foliage painted in yellow and blue, inscribed on the back : "F.F.D. FORTVNATVS PHILLIGEL-LVS P. ASCIANI 1578 DIES 30 AVGVSTI." It figured in the sale of the Passalacqua collection. The other is a white vase with handles formed of entwined serpents, the reliefs being touched up with green. It bears the inscription : "F.P. —ASCIANI XII MAII, 1600. Vasari relates that Luca della Robbia, having to execute an altar-piece for the local convent of the *Minori Conventuali*, repaired to Asciano, and found that the potters' kilns of the place were well adapted to the firing of his ware. We could not have a more striking evidence of the simple technical methods employed by the greatest ceramists of those times.

### III

## ROMAN STATES

DERUTA—MONTE BAGNOLO OR BAGNOREA—FOLIGNO—  
FABRIANO—ROMA—VITERBO—LORETO—LA FRATTA

### DERUTA

WHEN cogitating over the origin of Italian majolica—I mean the probable time and place where and when the stanniferous enamel found its normal application in pottery manufacture—we are more confused than assisted by having to discuss documentary records which, referring undeniably to the most antique handicraft—the making of *boccali* and *scodelle*—strike us as having little to do with the special object of our inquiry. At this stage of my narrative I shall have to ask leave to take the Deruta ware as telling its own tale, before I revert to corroborating documents.

The claim of priority over all other centres of production which may be set up in favour of Deruta is not, I confess, supported by the testimony of any old chronicler or the evidence of even a few dated pieces. Yet I have always felt that the claim could not be summarily dismissed, and that the historical interest of ware of such an individual and decided character had so far been underrated. The next step was to try and ascertain the true value of what might prove to be a merely intuitive opinion. But owing to the absence of tangible proofs I have had to proceed by a series of inductions. It is on this ground that I will ask the reader to follow me.

We must go back to the time when the place that majolica was shortly to assume as the favourite pottery of the



Italians of the Renaissance, was occupied by the Hispano-Moresque ware. In the natural course of things, all the efforts made by the native potters with a view of supplanting foreign imports must have been directed towards the production of an acceptable equivalent. This was accomplished at Deruta, and doubtless at a very remote date, for nowhere else can we find an earlier manifestation of a knowledge of the secrets of the Moorish potters. A perfect similarity of technique links the lustred ware of Deruta with that of Valencia and Malaga. Deliberate imitation is openly asserted in the former. In the case of certain albarelli and small basins of Italian origin, but quasi-Oriental in their rudimentary decoration, discrimination from the Spanish prototypes becomes well-nigh impossible. On the other hand, the influence that Faenza has exerted, from the first, over all other factories, is not to be traced here; a distinction that could be accounted for by assuming the priority of the manufacture at Deruta.

To affix marks and inscribe dates upon their work was not then customary among pot-makers. Regrettable as it may be, the want of marks on the lustred majolica of Deruta may also be taken as a sign of primitive production. This deficiency has allowed Passeri to attribute to Pesaro all the early specimens enriched with lustre. If he mentions Deruta at all, it is as a small factory noted for the extreme whiteness of its products. We can scarcely believe that the name of the place whence came the elegant vessels glittering with prismatic colours, so much admired at the time, had already vanished from the memory of his contemporaries. We may sooner suspect that the impulsive historian of Pesaro did not care to investigate too closely the correctness of a pet supposition which, if implicitly taken for granted, would contribute to the glorification of his beloved town. His mis-statement was flatly confuted when, from the excavations carried on upon the sites of the old factories, there emerged a mass of lustred fragments which left no doubt as to the exact nature of the majolica made at Deruta. These instructive fragments have been described and impartially commented upon, first by E. Piot, and

PLATE X.

DERUTA.

Lustred Dish.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*









afterwards by E. Molinier. Nothing of the kind has ever been unearthed at Pesaro.

Deruta, or Diruta—the name is spelt indifferently—is a small village situated on the left bank of the Tiber, at a short distance from Perugia, on the road to Orvieto. The vicinity of the river afforded the means of easy communication with Rome and the other great cities from which the potters expected support. In 1514 the College of *Vasaii* of Rome decided that the pottery of Faenza and Urbino should pay taxes on entering the town, but that of Deruta should be admitted free, after examination by the consuls of the art. Of the past history of the works, of the masters and of the men connected with it, nothing was known until, in 1872, Prof. A. Rossi and Cte. Connestabile published the result of their fruitful investigations in the public archives of Perugia. They consist of eight separate documents, disclosing certain facts of general interest, but, unfortunately, leaving in the dark the points on which we stand most in want of information. We append a brief summary of their contents:—

1387. March 19.—Receipt given to the *vasaii* of Castel-Deruta for the sum of £6, the amount of their contribution to the cost of the procession of S. Ercolano.
1445. Oct. 20.—The deed of a partnership formed between Agnolo and Michelagnolo di Annibale on one part, and Pietro Cristofano and Giapocho *detto* Franciuolo *Vasari*, of Deruta, in the county of Perugia, on the other part. The company is constituted for making "*una arte di casa*" (one kind of vessels), at Montenero, district of Perugia, for the manufacture of which they will use the oven belonging to the aforesaid Michelagnolo. The other brother Agnolo promises to advance from the start of the business all the money that may be required for the purchase of lead, tin, potters' clay, zaffre, and all the other necessary colours, fuel for firing, etc. The two last partners, evidently the working hands, agree to supply all the manufacturing appliances, mills to grind



the colours, wheels for the turning of the vases, and generally all the tools wanted to carry on the pottery trade in the premises of the said Michelagnolo, where they are to work for three years. They shall also have charge of transporting and selling the goods at the fairs.

1488. Oct. 9.—Agreement between two potters of Deruta and a merchant of Perugia, settling the conditions of the purchase of “three loads of fine terra-cotta articles, works that they make themselves, as masters of the art.”
1511. Jan. 12.—A licence to reside in Deruta, granted to one Lazzaro di Battista de Faenza, “*qui fuit et est vasarius.*”
1513. March 31.—Rescript of the cardinal legate exempting the citizens of Deruta from tolls, taxes, and other duties on the weekly market day.
1521. Jan. 24.—The Prior and officers of the Confraternity of Saint Antony of Deruta pledge themselves to pay to the rector of the Saint Antony church at Perugia a yearly tribute of thirty-two pieces of majolica painted with the arms of the said rector.
1554. Jan. 24.—Decision rendered by the vice-legate in the litigation which had arisen between Pieragostino, a potter of Deruta, and the College of the *Vasari* of Perugia.
1588. June 18.—In compliance with a request of the potters of the town, Cardinal Gaetano decides that the exclusive privilege of gathering, in the whole province of Umbria, the broken glass used in the composition of the glaze in pottery manufacture, hitherto enjoyed by one Cesare de Alexandro de Christoforo de Deruta, shall be withdrawn.

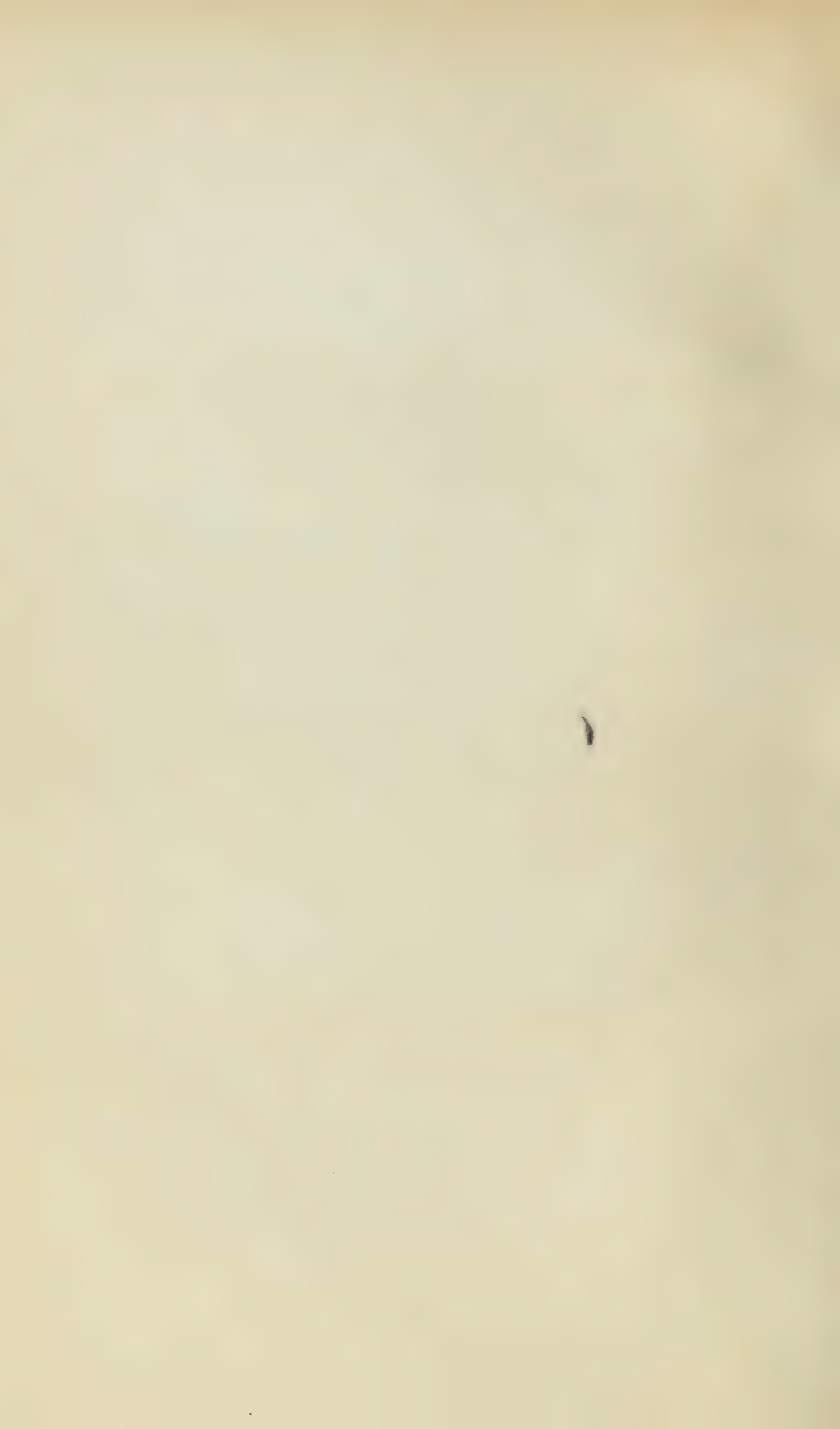
No information on the lustred ware, incontestably the glory of Deruta, is, as may be seen, to be obtained from the perusal of the above texts; unless it be that the words “the making of one kind of vessels,” appearing in the deed of 1475, implies a speciality of an undescribed nature, such as the production of metallic lustres would be; a standing mystery, the very name of which was not to be publicly pronounced.

PLATE XI.

DERUTA.

Lustred Vase with the Crowned Monogram of  
ANDREA.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*









But why should we deplore this scarcity of historical documents? The ware, as I have already said, is before us, and speaks for itself. Its technique plainly denotes an imitation of the Majorcan methods, and therefore an early beginning may reasonably be suspected. The man whose taste and talent gave to its eminently original style of decoration a definite form remains nameless; yet we know him by his works, which tell of a strongly artistic personality. So long as he retained the leading part in the conduct of the works, a piece of Deruta ware could not have been confounded with any specimen of different origin. It borrowed nothing from its Italian competitors, and it does not appear to have been imitated. All the time the scheme of colours retained its primitive simplicity. A light blue pigment, with which the design was outlined and shaded, combined with the superficial application of a metallic film of a brownish-yellow tint, with, occasionally, a few touches of a light yellow, were the only means at the disposal of the painter. The broad style of the composition, which always keeps within sober devices, and a well-balanced arrangement of lines, contribute not a little to produce a striking effect. The art of the master reaches its complete expression in numerous platters of large dimensions, bearing either the bust of a male or female personage accompanied by an inscribed banderole, the majestic figure of a patron saint, a sphinx, a chimera, or some other fabulous animal. A band of simple and robust ornament, avoiding all minuteness of detail, surrounds the capital motive (Pl. X.). Body and glaze remain unaltered by this artistic transformation; it is still Oriental ware with Italian designs. Public and private collections contain such a number of representatives of these typical dishes as to suggest that the production must have been considerable. Applied to vases the same simplicity of decoration is equally effective (see Pl. XI.).

Figured plaques for insertion in the walls, totally different from the architectural terra-cottas of the Della Robbias, were regularly made. Pressed out of a mould, the more or less highly embossed basso-relievo was entirely coated over with opaque



enamel. Upon the white field, the subject was traced and shaded with light blue, just as it would have been if they had proceeded on a flat surface. Finally, the work was brightened up in places with the chamois-coloured mother-of-pearl lustre. Generally ordered as a commemorative offering to some sanctuary, the date of the presentation was affixed to these plaques. For instance, a figure of Saint Sebastian, standing in front of a fictitious niche, is dated A DI 14 DI LULGIO 1501. All the details are worked up in light blue, and the background is covered with the distinctive Deruta nacreous lustre. This specimen is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Another plaque, offering the unmistakable characteristics of an *ex voto*, was in the Castellani collection. It represents a woman on her death-bed surrounded by a group of relatives in prayer; over the scene the Holy Virgin appears in the clouds. A thanksgiving inscription, relating how the patient had been miraculously saved, is completed with the date 1505.

The embossed models were frequently repeated. Four examples are known of a dish with the subject, in low relief, of the Adoration of the Shepherds. They are in the Arezzo, the Louvre, the Berlin Museums, and the Zschille collection; the dates vary from 1521 to 1534. A curious ornamental object, in the shape of a pine-cone, shining with the distinctive chamois-coloured lustre, is seen duplicated in many collections.

Painted pieces are more rarely dated. Having mentioned the example in the Salting collection—a dish with a sphinx on dark blue ground and the inscription FATA IN DIRUTA 1525—we do not find any dated pieces anterior to 1535. The tazza, with a head of Rome covered with a Renaissance helmet, in the Louvre Museum, and the one in the Cluny, on which the subject of Diana and Actæon is represented, which rank among the masterpieces of the art, bear no distinctive marks.

The primitive individuality of the Deruta ware was to be affected, and soon completely obliterated, by the arrival in the place of itinerant potters, whose intrusion led to the adoption of fresh styles. To the two colours that had,

PLATE XII.

DERUTA. (?)

Shield-shaped Inkstand, painted over a Decoration  
in Relief. Dated 1524.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











**DERUTA (?)**.

FIG. 28.—DISH WITH RELIEFS PAINTED IN BLUE.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





so far, been found sufficient, were added all the pigments of the majolist's palette. The designs lost their normal simplicity, and subjects of many figures began to be copied from popular prints. Unless it bears the rare mark, *fata in Deruta*, all the work done under the new condition is hopelessly confounded with the productions of Faenza, Gubbio, or Castel-Durante. Thus a dish of the Fountaine collection, although decorated *a candeliere* by a Castel-Durante hand with one of his favourite patterns, is inscribed FATTA IN DIRUTA, 1535. A wanderer from another place has signed his name on some specimens, one of which bears in full: FRANCESCO URBINI Ī DERUTA, 1537. A painter who has seldom failed to affix his name on the work of his hand, and has thereby acquired a certain celebrity, is *El Frate* (The Friar). Not that his talent is particularly commendable. It is what is called "unequal," which means to say that it is more often bad than good. He belongs to the second period. In the majority of his works the drawing is heavy and incorrect, the colours are harsh, the lustres more brassy than nacreous, the enamel itself has lost its former limpidity. His dated pieces range between 1541 and 1545; the words *in Deruta* usually accompany his signature.

Of the declining manufacture which continued to be precariously carried on, few traces have been left. A large plaque, painted with a woman's head, after Guido, has been reproduced in colours by Ch. Casati. It is inscribed "PETRUS PAULUS MANCINUS DE DIRUTA FECIT HOC HOPUS AD SUI USUM 1630." It is an amateurish work of detestable taste. In the Victoria and Albert Museum are ten pieces of inferior quality, one of which bears the inscription: "FECIT IN TERA DIRUTE." A dish, painted with blue flowers on yellow ground, in the Limoges Museum, is marked: "FABRICA DE MAJOLICA FINA DI GREGORIO CASELLA IN DIRUTA. 1771."

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## MONTE BAGNOLO

(OR BAGNOREA, NOW BAGNARA)

"FRANCESCO DURAN̄ÑO VASARO. A M̄OTE BAGNOLA D̄ PEROSCIA (Perugia). 1553." From this inscription it may be inferred that a majolica factory once existed in the place. It occurs upon an oval cistern of the Narford collection, the companion of which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Francesco Durantino is said to have made there some ware in the style of the Urbino pieces. In the same museum is a large dish of the decadent style, representing the Holy Family; on the reverse we read: "IO SILVESTRO DAGLI OTRINCI DA DERUTA. FATTO IN BAGNOREA 1691."

## FOLIGNO

Piccolpasso describes the mill in use at Foligno for the preparation of the clay, and also of the peculiar azure blue he calls *color di Foligno*. On this evidence alone the name has been added to the list of majolica factories. No marked piece has ever been found by which the statement could be substantiated. It should have been noticed that the Foligno glaze is likewise described by the writer as the lead "*coperta*," intended to be used over a coating of fine white earth. Accordingly we must believe that a kind of mezza-majolica, or what they called ware "*alla Borrina*," was more probably the production of the place.

## FABRIANO

The word FABRIANO, the date 1527, and an illegible signature, traced on the reverse of a remarkable dish, is all that we have to recall the memory of a factory, no records of which are in existence. The dish appeared in the Castellani sale, and passed into the hands of Mr. Basilewski. It bears a finely executed copy of Raffaello's Madonna della Scala, after



the engraving by Marc Antonio. Drury Fortnum describes a few other examples which bear a similar sign and seem to be the work of the same hand. One was in the Museum of Practical Geology; the other is in the Industrial Art Museum of Berlin. The ancient statutes contain references to the trade of the common pot-makers of Fabriano in the years 1415 and 1435; but they are silent on the manufacture of artistic ware which might, if we trust to the testimony of the inscribed dish, have been carried on there, as in many neighbouring towns. Popular pottery has never since ceased to be manufactured. Fifty years ago, Migliani and Son were making, at Fabriano, imitations of Gubbio lusted ware, and of the ancient *graffiti*.

### ROME

No manufacture of importance was ever started in the centre of a big town. Rome may have had numbers of obscure suburban pot-works which, since days out of record, have never ceased to supply the population with earthen vessels of all kinds; but the regular manufacture of artistic majolica does not seem to have ever been firmly implanted in the Eternal City. The regulations passed by the masters of the craft in 1514, which fixed the duties to be paid on the goods from Faenza and Urbino brought into the town, with exemption in favour of those of Deruta, would indicate that, if majolica was made at all, it was not in sufficient quantity to cope with the demand. Rome was bound to have ceramic artists, just as she possessed clever exponents of all the other branches of the decorative arts. Bertolotti, in his work, *Artisti Urbinati in Roma* (Urbino, 1881), gives the names of several majolists from Faenza, Pesaro, Montelupo, and Perugia, who practised their art in Rome between 1514 and 1518. This does not necessarily imply the existence of a central factory. Working in the capacity of an artist, rather than as a manufacturer, each of these craftsmen may have had a small kiln of his own in which he fired the work he had painted on ware obtained from the maker.

A set of twelve remarkable drug-jars, made for the hospital of San Giovanni in Laterano, where they are still preserved, have been attributed by S. Frascchetti to Roman manufacture. The powerful harmony of the colours and the quality of the enamel call to mind the best works of Faenza and Cafaggiolo; the jars were, obviously, painted by a hand trained at one of these places. They cannot be later than the early years of the sixteenth century. Eight of them bear the arms of the old hospital, a guarantee that they were expressly made for the place. The same writer has had the good fortune to discover in the registers of the hospital for the year 1513 an entry which has in all likelihood reference to these jars and their maker. It records the payment of a sum of 18 ducats and 57 bolognini made to M<sup>o</sup>. Lionardo, vasellaro, for the vases he has supplied for the pharmacy of the Sancta Sanctorum. According to other documents, this Lionardo, fiorentino, *quondam* Giovanni, vasaio in Piazza Navona, was one of the consuls of the *Artis Vasellariorum*. To S. Frascchetti we also owe the communication of the names of a great number of Roman *vasellari*, which figure in old deeds from 1517 to 1541. We are still waiting for a signed piece which might give us an idea of the exact kind of work they produced. Sometimes the misleading word *vasaio* may apply to a dealer in earthen pots. One Luca of Urbino, *vasaio*, residing in Rome, may, however, safely be considered as a majolist. It is reported that in 1550 Cardinal Lenoncourt gave him a commission to paint a service of vases, *Istoriati di terra*, after the designs of Paolo Folco.

Bertolotti, in the work quoted higher up, gives the text of a partnership, *Artis Majoricæ*, dated 1565, formed for five years between Luca Baldi and Antonio di Giovanni-Maria del Francese, from Castel-Durante. This Antonio del Francese, who was joined later on by one G. G. Superchini, was still working in 1579. A dish is known which is inscribed: "A DI 4 APRILLE 1579. FATO IN BOTEGA DA ANTONIO DA CASTEL DURATE IN ROMA." Two other artists, also belonging to Castel-Durante, but established in Rome—Diomedes Duran-



tino and G. P. Savino—have signed some pieces decorated, somewhat roughly, in the late Urbino manner. Their names appear on two pharmacy vases of the Fortnum collection. In both cases the words FATTO IN ROMA and the date MDC. are added to the mark. A vase of the same shape in the Industrial Art Museum of Rome also bears: ROMA 1600. A large dish, with the Temptation of Eve, framed in an Urbino border of loose treatment, and the inscription ALMA ROMA 1623, once in the collection of Miss Lockwood, of Rome, is described by Mr. Fortnum.

Hastily manufactured and cheaply painted, a burlesque of what it had been, yet still trying to look showy, the majolica of that time was disregarded and refused by all people of taste. Feeble attempts were then made to give an appearance of novelty to the old ware by introducing new styles of decoration, hoping to instil a spark of life, thereby, into a dying art. Thus, one Tomaso Savignonni obtained a papal privilege, in 1633, for the making of porcelain. It must be recollected that all the faïenciers of the time who made white ware decorated with Chinese patterns described their productions by the high-sounding name of porcelain. In 1673 a similar favour was granted to Lorenzo Pignani da Gualdo for the exclusive right of applying gold to majolica by a process theretofore unknown. Towards the middle of the next century the local manufactures had fallen into such disrepute that, in 1745, Gregorio Cerasoli boasts of his excellent imitations of the enamelled ware of Lodi, Marseilles, and Savona. So insignificant must have been the outcome of this pitiable effort to save a ruined industry from its fatal end, that such examples of it as may still be in existence are now lost in the mass of undetermined domestic vessels which no collector has ever cared to ascribe to any one particular maker.

On the factory founded in 1785 by the celebrated engraver Giovanni Volpato, and carried on by his successors, for the making of biscuit figures and imitations of English earthenware, where they never professed to make majolica, I do not think it necessary to dwell.



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## VITERBO

Two fine majolica tile pavements, dating from the opening of the sixteenth century, are still preserved at Viterbo. One is in the Mazzatosto chapel in the church of Della Verita, the other in that of Santa Elisabetta. Both are painted in the characteristic style of early Faenza, and on one of the much-defaced tiles of the latter may still be deciphered the name of Paolo di Nicolò "pittore." Whether they were local productions is, however, uncertain.

From among the remaining statutes of the arts in activity in the city in mediæval times, those of the *Vasaii* are unfortunately missing. Yet we have good cause to assume that, from an early date, the *figuli* formed a notable portion of the working population, and references to the former regulations of the craft, found in contemporary documents, testify to its antiquity. In the by-laws enacted in 1251 we see that, unlike the other inhabitants, the potters were allowed to circulate freely in that part of the town where their works are situated, after the toll of the curfew. It could scarcely have been otherwise, for we hear, in the next article, that the ovens are to be fired in the night, for fear of the nuisance that the smoke would cause to their neighbours if it were done during the day. Curious dispositions regulate the size of earthen vessels of the normal shape, directing that some of them should be provided with two handles. The craft had its own church in Viterbo, San Nicola dei Vascellari, mentioned as early as 1249, and demolished in 1667.

Although it may be that no majolica factory was ever in

steady operation in the town, it is, however, probable that some independent majolists kept a painting "atelier" there in conjunction with the ordinary pot-works. Diomede, of Castel-Durante, the same artist who subsequently removed to Rome, has a dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum, representing Diana and Actæon, which is marked "Ī VITERBO DIOMED 1544." On another dish, in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, bearing a figure of Hercules, the pagan protector of the old Etruscan city, may be read the truncated inscription, "I. F. R. VITERBIEN."

### LORETO

In the Santa Casa di Loreto is still preserved an unrivalled set of pharmacy drug-pots, of which we shall speak more fully when we come to deal with Urbino and the *bottega* of Orazio Fontana in which they were made. Executed by order of Guidobaldo II., Duke of Urbino, but not originally intended for the Sanctuary of Loreto, they were, however, sent there towards 1608, after the abdication of his successor, Duke Francesco-Maria II.—it is not known by whom or on what occasion. A few examples remain of the *scodelle*, or deep saucers, more intimately associated with the history of the Santa Casa and the glorious pilgrimages to that far-famed shrine. The image of the Holy Virgin, which is roughly painted on the inside of these small basins, in blue on a yellow ground, is surrounded with the legend, "CON POL(VERE) ET AQUA DI S. CASA." Made, or pretending to be made, with clay mixed with the dust brushed from the mantle of the miraculous statue and with holy water, the *scodelle* were purchased and carried away as holy relics by the pilgrims. Thousands of them may have been disposed of in that way: a single one may now be pointed out; it is in the D. Fortnum collection. The ware was supplied by one of the factories of the Roman States; there are no traces of its having been manufactured on the spot.



## LA FRATTA

In the pot-works of the region where La Fratta and Città di Castello are situated, it is said that the simple method of incising a design upon vessels made of red clay washed over with white earth had been practised for centuries, retaining all the time something of its pristine character. For that reason alone some writers have thought themselves warranted in placing at La Fratta, if not actually the birthplace of the *graffito* process of decoration, at any rate the centre of its larger development. According to popular recollections, the quantity of pottery of that order spread all over the province, but known to have been made at La Fratta, was very considerable. Without questioning the value of this local tradition, one is bound to allege that, as far as we know, not one specimen of the ware stands fully authenticated. It is needless to add that *graffito* decoration—a method common to many places in the early stages of manufacture—can never be taken, by itself, as an indication of origin.

Vessels of dark brown clay, richly embossed with reliefs, and figures of the same material, were also counted among the staple articles of production.





**LA FRATTA.**

FIG. 29.—DISH OF BROWN CLAY.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*



## IV

### DUCHY OF URBINO

PESARO—GUBBIO, GUALDO AND SAN NATORIA—CASTEL-  
DURANTE—URBINO—CITTÀ DI CASTELLO—  
BORGO SAN SEPULCRO

#### PESARO

THE struggles for supremacy, so long raging between the rival cities of mediæval Italy, were not confined to a betterment of social conditions and an extension of political influence; they entailed a fierce competition to secure pre-eminence abroad for the local arts and industries. It is only by taking into consideration this unswerving spirit of combativeness that we can understand the simultaneous development of so many majolica factories within a comparatively limited geographical area. They may be said to have all started at a bound, and each with equal chances of success. Such a short span of years separates the dates of their respective establishment that one is unable to range them into chronological order. So high did each of them set the pitch of their ambition, so near did they all approach the goal they had in view, that it is difficult to decide which of these competitive factories has, in all points, surpassed its rivals.

If, in conformity with established custom, I place Pesaro at the head of this present section of my work, I wish it to be understood that I have no intention to intimate thereby that the other important factories, likewise situated in the Duchy of Urbino, should stand, with respect to Pesaro, in a position of inferiority. We can no longer follow Passeri



in his patriotic endeavours to establish that from that most antique seat of pottery-making have emanated the chief improvements of the art of the majolist. Too great a confidence in his interpretation of ancient texts caused him to neglect the necessity of supporting his arguments by the production of objective evidence. At the present day, an impartial examination of the ware which may safely be attributed to Pesaro tends to discredit the accuracy of the opinions propounded by a self-blinded historian.

Passeri preludes a series of mis-statements by alluding to the *bacini* of the twelfth century, embedded in the walls of some Romanesque churches. He declares them to be of Pesaro manufacture—which is by no means certain—and adds that they are enriched with *madreperla* lustre—which is quite incorrect. On this statement he based the theory that metallic lustres were invented at Pesaro, and he goes farther by saying that most of the specimens decorated in that manner should be considered as having the same origin.

Archæological records extend, in the present case, as far back into the Middle Ages as in any other ancient pottery district. In the civic register, at the date Feb. 12, 1396, is entered the name of one Pedrinus Johannis a *Boccalibus*, of Forlì, as residing in the town. Passeri appends to that name the information that potters were then making *mezza-majolica* painted with yellow, green, purple and blue. The use of so many colours at that early period is not shown by any known example. Further on, he describes the improved enamelled ware which was being produced towards 1450 (?). It included pieces decorated with bands of arabesques, framing a central subject consisting of a coat of arms, or a fanciful portrait of a woman, the face of which was left white, while the vestments and other accessories were covered with “*madreperla*” lustre. We feel no difficulty in recognising in that description the typical dishes of Deruta. But on what grounds Passeri could attribute them to Pesaro, and how he came to fix the date, are questions left unanswered.

A letter from Pope Sixtus IV., dated 1474, addressed to

Costenzo Sforza, lord of Pesaro, and another from Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, to Roberto Malatesta, both containing thanks for presents of elegant earthenware vases, "prized as much as if they were of gold or silver," and "quite a novelty in these parts," were given by Dennistoun in his *History of the Dukes of Urbino*. Some writers have thought it expedient to suggest that because such vases were sent by a lord of Pesaro they could be nothing else but productions of his faithful town. I confess that I do not see the force of this interpretation. A present of Oriental porcelain, then very highly valued, would have been better intended as an offering to a prince than some crude trials of imperfect majolica. Moreover, I think that a scarce foreign article is clearly alluded to in the words, "quite a rarity in these parts."

A deed of partnership between three merchants, referring to the extension of a shop already existing in the town for the sale of pottery, was executed by the notary Sepolcro Sepolcri, in 1462. The names of the partners occur again, April 28, 1463, in a transaction for the purchase of 1,200 pounds of *terra ghetta* (used in the making of mezza-majolica) from one Mario Torto of Perugia.

With a view to the protection of a promising industry, a decree was recorded in April, 1486, which prohibited the entrance and the sale in the town of all foreign pottery, except the jars for oil and wine. But when we read the extravagant terms in which this decree is worded, we must carefully avoid the false impression that it might leave on our mind. One paragraph runs as follows: "And whereas the practice of the art of vase-making is of great antiquity in the aforesaid city, and was there brought to a higher degree of perfection than in any other parts of Italy; this art being, moreover, still extensively practised at Pesaro, where it wins the admiration of our own and all foreign countries," etc.

We have to make allowances for the pompous and adulatory form of Italian phraseology before we take this hyperbolic glorification of the local industry for what it is really worth. Were we to accept it to the letter, the moot point of priority



and superiority between Italian factories would be peremptorily decided; and yet it remains as far from being settled as ever. The Pesaro ware is expressly mentioned in an inventory of 1491, quoted from by Marchese Campori, in which is mentioned "a plate fashioned and painted like those made in Pesaro." The same author supplies a document, dated 1493, referring to the vessels that were to be executed at Pesaro by command of Isabella d'Este. Perplexing, indeed, is the conflicting contrast of documentary testimonies to the early production of a ware which appears to have been of an ornamental character, with the absolute lack of examples by which these records could be illustrated. Could it be that this deficiency is due to the paucity of the output, and that the few relics of it that have escaped destruction are not and never can be identified? We notice that the few names extracted from the civic registers before 1550 are those of pottery dealers, not of notable working majolists. We also hear that, as in many other places, ovens were not allowed to be erected in the centre of the city, but that some of them were in operation six miles distant, on a spot called La Gabice, the site of an old Roman pot-works. The workmen, however, gathered to the town on special occasions. An edict of 1510 regulates the place that the *figuli* (common potters) and the *fornacierary* (oven-men) shall occupy in the annual procession of San Terenzio. It is presumable that the larger part of the manufacture consisted of rude domestic pottery, and that a small amount of decorative work was made in the *bottegas* of the town, but in such an unpretentious manner that, at least in early times, no mark was ever affixed to it by the decorator. Be it as it may, before the middle of the sixteenth century we do not find a single piece which we could in all security attribute to Pesaro manufacture.

When we come to the first inscribed and dated example, it is a rather late one, for it refers us to the year 1540. It is in the Fortnum collection. From that moment, marked specimens become plentiful enough to indicate that a brisk impulse had been given to the manufacture. Pesaro was then entering



into close competition with the other centres, and enjoying its share in the general prosperity.

Drury Fortnum has compiled a long list of authenticated specimens of this brilliant but short period of revival, and gives a description of the best ones. The inscriptions on the dishes make us aware that the majolist, conscious of the progress just accomplished, is now proud of proclaiming his connection with the town, for he seldom fails to add to the title of the subject he has represented the mention, "FATTO IN PESARO." He signs his work either with his initials or his full name; owing to this care, the personality of a few of the best craftsmen has been revealed to us. Maestro Girolamo Lanfranco delle Gabice stands conspicuous in the group, not only as a painter but also as the master of a *bottega* from which was issued some of the best work. He was one of those who, in association with Bernardin Gagliardino, Ranaldo, and other masters of Pesaro, signed an application to Guid' Ubaldo II. to obtain the prohibition of the importation of foreign pottery into the town. A decree to that effect was issued in 1552. To Girolamo Lanfranco alone was granted, in 1562, an extension of the duration of his privilege for the application of real gold to the wares (?). The mark of the Lanfranco *bottega* is seen on many pieces. On a fine tazza, in the British Museum, on which the subject of Cicero discoursing upon the Law before Julius Cæsar is represented, it appears thus: "1542 IN LA BOTEGA D̄ MASTRO GIROLAMO DA LE GABICE IN PESARO." The master was still young when this piece was executed, for he died in 1598.

One of his assistants was the painter we have found at Siena, signing his work I.P. The initials do not stand, by-the-by, for "IN PESARO," as Passeri has read them, but for *Iacomo Pinsur*. A work of his hand, a plate with bathing nymphs, in the Bologna Museum, is signed in full, "FATTO IN PESARO 1542 IN BOTTEGA DI MASTRO GIRONIMO VASARO. IACHOMO PINSUR."

A *coppa amatoria*, also described by D. Fortnum, gives us the names of two more majolists. It is inscribed, on the

reverse, "FATTO IN LA BOTTEGA DI MASTRO BALDASSAR VASARO DA PESARO E FATO PER MANO DI TERENCEZIO FIOLO DI MASTRO MATTEO BOCCALARO"; on the front, the date 1550 and *Terencio fecit* are introduced into a cartel.

After 1566, the year inscribed on a dish of the Dutuit collection with the subject of Mucius Scaevola, no more dated pieces are found.

I will not lengthen the above list by adding to it mention of the many pieces of doubtful origin ascribed to Pesaro. Collectors and writers have brought much sagacity into play when trying to support an attribution seldom accepted by their colleagues. Such a large number of specimens have been assigned to the Pesarese factories, with so little cause, that further speculations are now regarded with distrust. From a well-pondered examination of the aggregate of fully-marked productions comes the conclusion that they do not show any special quality, either technical or artistic, which could be credited to the inventive power of the Pesaro potters. As far as we can judge, their work is neither better nor worse than the "historied" majolica made at the same period in the other minor factories which followed the steps of the leading masters. A style of decoration which consisted chiefly in copies of engravings of religious or classical subjects, spreading over the whole surface of a piece, is of little assistance in the task of identification. Through its typical ornamentation we can recognise a characteristic example of Faenza, Deruta, Gubbio, and other well-defined manufactures. This criterion fails us in the present case; there is no distinct type of Pesaro by means of which the regular productions could be recognised. The presence of metallic lustres has too often been taken as a sign of origin. Chiefly grounded only on Passeri's statement, the validity of the test stands much in want of confirmation. So few are the instances of an authenticated work of Pesaro being completed by the application of metallic lustres, so similar in character are these lustres to those made at Gubbio, that we may well ask ourselves whether the Pesarese potters actually practised the secret process them-



selves, or simply sent the finished ware to be lusted at Gubbio. We know for a fact that Maestro Giorgio made it a part of his regular business to enrich with his iridescent *réflets* the ware of various *provenances*. It is, on the whole, rash to venture an attribution, and we must not be surprised if, in the most carefully catalogued collections, the designation PESARO is usually accompanied with the query (?).

All was over for the Pesaro factories when the seventeenth century came to an end. A single master potter, A. Mazi, was at work in the town in 1718, making pottery of the commonest sort. In 1763, A. Casali and P. A. Caligara attempted to revive the manufacture of ornamental ware; but, to the intense disgust of their contemporary Passeri, they ignored the old style, and directed all their efforts to competing with the Dutch imitations of Chinese porcelain. The few examples that remain of the venture do not give a very high idea of the capabilities of their makers. Indifferent reproductions of the old lusted ware were made in 1864 by Marchese Giacomo Mattei, assisted by two practical men. The Molaroni and the Società Ceramica di Pesaro also produced commonplace imitations of ancient majolica.

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#### GUBBIO—GUALDO—SAN NATORIA

The mere name of Gubbio evokes in the mind of the majolica-lover visions of prismatic opalescence and rainbow-like irradiations. From a purely æsthetic point of view, considerations of that order should certainly rank far below those grounded on artistic estimation. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there is an indescribable fascination for the eye



in the play of brilliant colours radiating from the lusted parts of a piece of Gubbio. The richness of its metallic lustres gives an individual and unmistakable character to the ware of that origin. That of Deruta, which alone might be compared to it, is, however, perfectly distinct from its rival. We notice that the former never departed from the nacreous and brassy lustres originally borrowed from the Moorish potters, while the latter may take credit for having added to the fundamental process varieties of lustre tints, passing from bluish purple to ruby red, from golden yellow to emerald green, the methods of which were never known at Deruta. A common production of the metallic lustres, at a time when the secret had not been mastered at any other place, suggests, however, that an early link of relationship may have existed between the two factories. The fact that Gubbio was situated at a short distance from Deruta would support this presumption. Assuming, therefore, that one of the factories was a direct derivation from the other, the order in which they should be placed remains to be determined. What seems most probable is, that the elementary methods of the mysterious manufacture must have been borrowed from the place where they continued to be practised long after, without any modification, by a competitive establishment, in which some enterprising and ingenious artificer brought them to the highest degree of perfection. This solution of the problem would leave to Deruta a right to claim priority while detracting nothing from the merits of an illustrious offspring.

As usual, we find at Gubbio records of common pottery having been made in the place ever since common pots had been wanted for domestic purposes. The earliest one refers to a *Collegio dei Vasaii*, which appears to have been fully organised by the year 1300. Another document relates to the trade privileges obtained in 1348 by one Luccolo di Giovanetto Andreneoli, *vasarius vasorum pictorum*.

Of greater interest to us is the municipal act by which the rights of citizenship were granted, in 1498, to Maestro Giorgio Andreoli. All that we know of Gubbio—which was never

PLATE XIII.

GUBBIO.

The Warriors. Lustred Dish, marked M° Giorgio, 1520.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











**GUBBIO (?).**

FIG. 30.—DISH PAINTED IN BLUE, THE DESIGN  
HEIGHTENED WITH YELLOW AND RUBY  
LUSTRES. EARLY XVI. CENTURY. THE  
BACK IS GLAZED WITH LEAD.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**GUBBIO.**

FIG. 31.—DISH WITH THE MONOGRAM OF CHRIST  
LUSTRED ON FRONT AND BACK.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





an important manufacturing centre, but still deserves a high place in ceramic history—is connected with the efforts and achievements of Maestro Giorgio and his family.

Coming from Pavia, which they had had to leave for political reasons, the Andreolis were of noble stock. They chose the avocation of pottery-painting because a nobleman could do so without derogation; and they settled at Gubbio, not simply to find employment in some majolica factory, but, as we shall see just now, to establish a superior kind of manufacture which did not exist in the city. A few years elapsed before Maestro Giorgio and his brothers Salimbene and Giovanni addressed a petition to the civic authorities to obtain the regularisation of their legal standing in the town. They represented that for several years they had practised their art there to great credit to themselves. In compliance with their request, the freedom of the city, with exemption from taxes, duties, etc., was granted to M<sup>o</sup>. Giorgio on condition that he would establish a permanent industry that should be of benefit to the inhabitants, and that he would make himself liable to pay a penalty of 500 ducats in the event of his transferring his art and business into another town.

At that time, if we can trust the portrait preserved in the Gubbio Museum and reproduced by De Mely, inscribed "GEORGIO ANDREOLI PATRICIVS IGUVINUS. A. 1498," the very year in which the decree was signed, M<sup>o</sup>. Giorgio was a man of middle age. A favourite with Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, the great protector of arts and artists, he was by him appointed *castellano*, or governor, of the Gubbio fortress.

Whether the master was already producing metallic lustres when he established the factory which obtained such celebrity for its unrivalled application to painted majolica, cannot be ascertained. It is as a modeller, as an experienced maker of enamelled terra-cotta—not as a painter—that we find, for the first time, the name of Giorgio Andreoli associated with the recognised work of his hand. Two large altar-pieces, not unworthy of the Della Robbia, of whom they proclaim him a pupil, are still partly, if not completely, in existence.

The first one was executed in 1511 for the chapel of the Bentivoglio family in the church of San Dominic at Gubbio. Although this ceramic monument was once divided and sold piecemeal, the statue of Saint Antony, abbot, which formed the central figure, has remained in its place. The authentic receipt for the money paid for the work is preserved in the municipal archives. The second altar-piece, still more imposing in character, a complicated composition dedicated to the "Madona del Rosario," was placed two years afterwards, in 1513, in the same church. This was also ruthlessly disconnected, but the central portion has been reconstituted, and may now be seen in the Museum of Frankfort-on-Main. Upon separate figures and works of lesser importance the distinctive ruby lustre shines in all its brilliancy. I will mention, as a typical specimen of this sort, a plaque with a subject in low relief after a picture of Perugino, in the possession of Marchese R. Brancaleoni. It represents the Holy Virgin crowned by two angels, with the figure of a saint standing on each side. The vestments of the personages are richly illuminated with red and golden *réflets*. It is, however, upon small vases and various diminutive objects, artfully embossed with gadroons, bosses, rows of pearls, etc., on which the light, striking the metallic film at different angles, produces variegated and wonderful effects, that the process is shown to the best advantage. Of this kind of piece, two good examples are given on Pl. XVI.-XVII. They are supposed, not improbably, to represent the earliest applications of the ruby lustre, at a time when it was considered as being in itself a sufficient means of decoration, and not as the subservient enrichment of a painted subject. A coat of arms, an emblem, or a monogram adorns occasionally the front of the vase, but no such an inscription as we should like to find for our enlightenment as to their precise date has ever been found upon any of them.

It is not until we come to the year 1515 that we see Maestro Giorgio asserting himself as a painter of elaborate trophies, arabesques, and figure subjects. This is the date affixed upon a plate seen by his biographer, R. Brancaleoni,

PLATE XIV.

GUBBIO.

Plate with Metallic Lustre. Maestro Giorgio, 1524.

*British Museum.*













**GUBBIO.**

FIG. 32. — DRUG-POT WITH MÉTALLIC LUSTRES.  
*British Museum.*



in "Casa Piccini." The painting, which represents the Sacrifice of Abraham, and is dated 1515, is enhanced with ruby lustre. The plate is marked on the reverse, also in lustre, with a sleeved arm, the hand of which cuts with a pickaxe through what appears to be a rainbow. After this, dated pieces succeed each other with little interruption. The following, authenticated either by a mark or the presence of the distinctive lustres, may be chosen as representatives of the style of his work at various periods:—

1517-18.—A plate with a rich border of trophies, etc., formerly in the R. Napier collection.

1518-19.—A plate with Saint Francis of Assisi receiving the stigma. Victoria and Albert Museum.

In both cases the first date, pencilled in blue under the glaze, is the one at which the piece had been finished by the painter; the second one, traced in lustre over the glaze, represents the year in which it was completed with the application of metallic lustres. Many instances are known of finely-painted pieces which, although signed M.G., do not bear any lustred complement.

1519.—A plate in Casa Tondi, at Gubbio, referred to by Brancaleoni.

1520.—A plate in the Dutuit collection, with "The Judgment of Paris," after Raffaelle. To the same epoch may be assigned the dish with "The Three Graces," also after Raffaelle, in the Salting collection (Pl. XV.), an exceptional example of good painting with a very sober addition of golden lustre.

1525.—A plate with "The Stream of Life," after Robetta. In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

1528.—A plate with "The Chase of the Calydonian Boar." Castellani collection.

1532.—A dish with "The Presentation of the Virgin," inscribed "*Fine di Majolica.*" In the Museum of the Bologna University. Said to be one of the finest pieces known.



After 1532 the series of dated pieces marked with the sign M.G., and therefore attributable to Maestro Giorgio, might be extended up to 1541. But although they may come from his *bottega*, no specimen of that late period can be recognised as the actual work of his hand. His sons and successors may have used the famed monogram as a trade-mark, affixing it often to articles of very inferior quality. Confusion, however, is scarcely possible, for if anything distinguishes the genuine work of the masters from the late imitations it is a stamp of elegance, a degree of finish in the treatment, altogether absent from the productions of the factory in its decline.

Besides being assisted by his two brothers, Salimbene and Giovanni, and later on by his son Vincenzo, Maestro Giorgio opened his *ateliers* to all the talented majolists who chose to work in collaboration with him. Many of the best artists of the times did not disdain to see their painting enriched with the metallic lustres of which alone he possessed the secret. In such cases the mark of the artist and that of the practical man appeared conjointly on the same piece. These united marks have revealed the collaboration of such celebrated men as Francesco Xanto da Rovigo, and Orazio Fontana, from Urbino; Baldassare Manara, from Faenza; Nicolo da Urbino, who worked at Castel-Durante; and others whose names have remained unknown. As to the personal marks of Maestro Giorgio, they are so numerous—Drury Fortnum reproduces close on sixty varieties—that they cannot be considered here. On all his finest works he has signed in full “MASO. GIORGIO DA UGUBIO.”

No majolica works were ever started at Gubbio in opposition to those of the Andreoli family. The master had three sons, viz., Vincenzo, or Cencio, who joined his father and uncles in the business; Ubaldo, of whom nothing is known; and Francesco, nicknamed *Il Cortese* (the Courtier), who was, in 1556, raised to the high position of *Vicario Generale* of the Duchy of Urbino, and was also ambassador to Rome and Naples.

In 1536, Maestro Cencio married; and, having parted from his father, he is said to have begun to work on his own account.

PLATE XV.

GUBBIO.

The Three Graces, after Raffaelle; with the Monogram  
of Maestro Giorgio, 1525.

*Salting Collection.*









PLATE XVI.

GUBBIO.

Golden Lustre Vase.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*













**GUBBIO.**

FIG. 33.—PLATE WITH A RECLINING RIVER-GOD, TAKEN FROM RAFFAELLE'S "JUDGMENT OF PARIS." ON THE REVERSE, BANDS OF YELLOW LUSTRES, SCROLLS, AND INSCRIPTION IN RUBY LUSTRE, MO. GIORGIO, 1527.



Certain pieces signed PRESTINO in various forms of spelling are attributed to him. Brancaleoni is of opinion that an uncommon skill and dexterity of execution had won for him that cognomen, just as that of *Luca fa Presto* was, for the same reasons, given to the painter Luca Giordano. The son of Giorgio was in possession of all the trade secrets of his father, and doubtless made great use of them himself. But already in 1548, when Piccolpasso wrote his treatise of the potter's art, the recondite recipes of the metallic lustres had lost much of their value, for the writer tells us that he had no difficulty in obtaining them from M<sup>o</sup>. Cencio. The instructions he gave are absolutely correct. We must not be surprised, however, if no one seems to have taken advantage of the disclosure of a secret which had become public property, and if the practice of the process was thenceforth discontinued. In the production of the lustres success does not depend so much on the employ of the right materials as on delicate manipulations, the conduct of which cannot be communicated in writing. Moreover, the result of the operation is always uncertain. The factory was extinct when M<sup>o</sup>. Cencio, who had abandoned pottery manufacture and was engaged in the commerce of wool—the staple trade of the town—died in 1576.

Things had been prosperous enough for the Andreolis so long as they enjoyed the patronage of the Dukes, and public favour had kept up the demand for an artistic ware of superior order. The *bottega* does not seem to have ever supplied the trade with common articles. Towards 1551 all had been changed for the worse. Bent with age and infirmities, involved in financial embarrassments, Maestro Giorgio had to address in that year a petition to the Duke Guidobaldo II. on his accession to power. He humbly represented that the privilege kindly granted to him by Guidobaldo I. had been confirmed by the Duke Francesco. His numerous family of brothers, sons, and nephews were all living and working together in his house, carrying on the manufacture of majolica which he had imported into the town. He begged that his privileges, exemption from taxes and duties,



should be continued to his heirs. The full text of the two documents is given in Vanzolini's *Majoliche Metaurensi*.

When the petitions were presented in 1551 the master had been settled in Gubbio for fifty-three years. Judging from the portrait painted in 1498, which is that of a man about forty years old, we must conclude that he had then reached the great age of ninety. He was still alive the year after, in 1552, but there is no record of the date of his death.

None of the metallic lustres obtained by other majolists—ancient or modern—have ever equalled in soft brilliancy, in vigorous and yet harmonious effects, those we see on the work of Maestro Giorgio. But to say that the secret of producing a tolerably good imitation of his lustred colours has ever been completely lost would be quite incorrect. The practice has never ceased to be in operation in Spain, and, when wanted, the process was quickly revived in Italy. In the very town of Gubbio, towards 1850, when public attention was turned once more towards majolica, imitations of *rubino* and *madreperla* were successfully made in the factory of L. Ceccarelli by Luigi Carocci, and a few years afterwards by G. Spinace de Isei. However close to the original the result of these experiments may have come, a collector of some experience may set at rest any apprehension of falling into a mistake; so far, a piece of Gubbio majolica of the best period has never been successfully forged.

A particular red lustre of great intensity, noticed upon an ewer in the Louvre and a dish in the Cluny Museum, both resembling in other features the best majolica of Gubbio, has induced some connoisseurs to choose these two pieces as representatives of the products of Gualdo. No marks, no names of potters or artists, have ever been connected with the existence of this somewhat problematic factory.

A veil is spread upon the past days of San Natoria, in the March of Ancona, where Piccolpasso reports they also made lustred ware, and of Nocera, an outskirt of Gubbio, mentioned by Marryat.

PLATE XVII.

GUBBIO.

Ruby Lustred Vase.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*









PLATE XVIII.

GUBBIO.

Lustred Dish with the Arms of the Dukes of Urbino.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











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## CASTEL-DURANTE OR URBANIA

In the year 1284, a French bishop, Guillaume Durand, one of those valiant mediæval prelates who upheld the interests of the Church with the gospel in one hand and a sword in the other, began the erection of a fortress upon a hill round which ran the meandering river Metauro protecting it from any unexpected attack. It was, in honour of its founder, called Castel-Durante. The small community which gathered and thrived under its protecting walls included, no doubt, a few pot-makers among the artisans, whose works satisfied the modest wants of the people. We cannot expect that the coarse earthen vessels they made were good enough to deserve historical record. Yet the name of one Giovanni dai Bistugi, who died in 1330, has been preserved. His cognomen is interesting inasmuch as it implies that the man was only making "biscuit" or terra-cotta ware, while some of his mates were probably producing glazed pottery, or some kind of improved ware which, it is not necessary to say, was still very far from resembling the majolica made at a much later date. It is accepted that the process came from the Moorish countries. Flourishing as the growth of this new plant may have been, at Castel-Durante, it cannot be asserted that this was the soil in which a cutting from a foreign tree took root for the first time.

The local historian, G. Raffaelli, describes a plaque bearing in relief and enamelled in colours, the arms of the Feltreschi. It was once encrusted over the door of the Locanda della Posta, built towards 1440. It has now disappeared. The plaque may have been posterior in date to the building of the house, and, moreover, a work made, at that period, in the style of the Della Robbia need not surprise us. The evidence

is of little value in regard to the history of painted majolica. Neither can we know for certain whether any of the nine potters established in the town towards 1490 was making anything better than sgraffito *scodelli* and the coarsely painted *boccali* of lead-glazed ware. Of their work, or of any other work made at such an early date, no example has ever been recognised.

The earliest inscribed piece that has come under notice is calculated to give us a very high opinion of the capabilities of the nameless majolist who was then the leading man at Castel-Durante. It is a bowl, dated 1508, once in the possession of Mrs. H. T. Hope. On a ground of deep blue colour stands the escutcheon of the Della Rovere family surmounted by the papal emblems, the arms of Pope Julius II. Two small cartels at the sides contain the words: *Iv. Pon. Max.* and *Tu es Sacerdos i etern.* The whole field of the piece is covered with an ingenious arrangement of trophies of arms and instruments, festoons and foliage, cupids and satyrs, in short, the style of ornamentation which, under the name *a candeliere*, forms one of the distinctive features of the production of the place. On the reverse we read the following inscription: "1508 A DI 12 DE SETE° FATA FU I CASTEL DURĀTJ ZOUA MARIA URO." Authors do not agree on the interpretation of the last word. Some take the abbreviation to stand for *Vasaro*, others think it should be read *Urbino*. Describing that bowl, J. C. Robinson has said: "This magnificent piece is a triumph of the art." Two pharmacy jars, once forming part of an important set, are inscribed "NE LA BOTEGA DI SEBASTIANO D' MARFORIO...1519...IN CASTEL DURA." They are in the British and the Victoria and Albert Museums respectively.

A tazza in the Louvre, representing Apollo and Marsyas, inscribed "*Castel Durante 1525*," is attributed to Giorgio Picchi, previously a partner of Marforio. To the same artist is also assigned the plate of the Campana collection, painted with the Rape of Ganymede, and dated with the same year. "Both," said an old writer, "are worthy of Raffaele's own hand."

PLATE XIX.

CASTEL-DURANTE.

The Musicians.

Signed with a B; about 1530.

*British Museum.*













**CASTEL-DURANTE.**

FIG. 34.—PLATE WITH THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.  
BLUE DECORATION ON THE BACK.

*Victoria and Albert Museum*





**CASTEL-DURANTE.**

FIG. 35.—PLATE WITH A DANCE OF CUPIDS,  
AFTER MARC ANTONIO.

*Ashmolean Museum.*







**CASTEL-DURANTE.**

FIG. 36.—THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

SIGNED F. R.

*British Museum.*





A vase in the Gavet collection gives us the name of "MASTRO SIMONO IN CASTEL DURĀTE, 1562." On some drug jars of coarse treatment is inscribed: "GIAM BATISTA CARLI DI TERRA DURANTIS ET JOHANNES DUCA FILIUS EJUS FECET PILLURUM. 1618."

Of the numerous potters and artists of whom Raffaelli has compiled the lengthy roll, we can hardly recognise the respective productions among the pieces merely inscribed "*fato in Castel Durante*," the dates of which extend from 1520 to 1562. The monograms are fewer than in any other centres; not one of them has been identified. Yet the artists of the place were talented enough to be in great demand in other places. During the first years of the sixteenth century, Guido di Savino is said to have imported the art into Antwerp; Giovanni Tesio and Luccio Gatti went to settle in Corfù in 1530; Francesco di Pier del Vasaro was called to Venice to build a majolica furnace; finally, Guido Durantino and the Fontana family, all coming from Castel-Durante, contributed not a little to the celebrity of the neighbouring town, Urbino. Cipriano Piccolpasso, born in 1524, was also a Durantino. His MS. treatise, *I tre Libri dell' Arte del Vasajo*, written at the instigation of Cardinal de Tournon, in 1550, has been the foundation of our knowledge of the manufacture at his time.

Under the auspices of the Duke Guidobaldo II., who often resided and held his court at Castel-Durante, the trade had grown to such an extent that, towards the middle of the sixteenth century, thirteen factories were at work in the town. The street in which they were situated is still called *Via della Porcellana*. At the death of Francesco Maria II., the last Duke of Urbino, in 1632, their prosperity came to an end; all the remaining works were soon closed, and the potters repaired to other places.

On his assuming the tiara, Pope Urban VIII., a native of Castel-Durante, raised the village to the rank of a city, under the name of Urbania, in 1635. The last efforts made at that time are represented by a dish in the Louvre, painted with the Triumph of Flora, and inscribed: "HIPOLLITO ROMBALDOTTI

PINSE IN URBANIA." The same artist also signed a large vase with serpent handles bearing the date 1678. The mark "FATTA IN URBANIA NELLA BOTEGA DEL SIGNOR PIETRO PAPA, 1667," is found upon another dish of the Louvre Museum.

A mere record of an attempted revival of the ceramic industry favoured by the Cardinal President Stoppani, and of the production, towards 1750, of loosely painted subjects after Caracci and other masters of his school, must bring to an end this curtailed account of the vicissitudes of Castel-Durante.

Next to Faenza, Castel-Durante appears to have been the most prolific centre of majolica manufacture. The output of the factories was certainly considerable. They never aimed, it is true, at rivalling their neighbour Urbino in the making of costly and stupendous masterpieces, but they took care not to let the average production go below a certain standard of taste and refinement. Certain examples of the ware, although of modest proportions, show a degree of finish and artistic treatment that make them the equal of more pretentious performances. No name of any prominent personality has ever cast the glory of its fame upon a co-operative group of masters and assistants; yet we are aware that under some anonymous guidance a host of talented artists, constantly dispersed and constantly renewed, was trained in the ateliers of Castel-Durante. We have seen some of them, and we shall see many others, acting as leaders in other places. The great variety of the productions precludes the idea of establishing absolute tests of identification; yet certain distinctive features may be pointed out, through which the best defined types may be easily recognised.

It is important to take into consideration the quality of the biscuit, which is, as a rule, of a rare lightness of tint and density of substance. The clays of the region are of exceptional value in the manufacture of pottery. For the making of bricks, bats, and saggers, they had a suitable red earth in abundance. For the fashioning of the ware, they used the argillaceous deposits left by the river Metauro. These were of

PLATE XX.

CASTEL-DURANTE.

The Calumny of Apelles—an Adaptation of Sandro  
Botticelli's Picture.

By NICOLA PELLIPARIO (1515). One of the Service preserved in the  
Correr Museum at Venice.

*Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*











two sorts: that of a bluish colour, called *celestrina*, was used to throw and turn the vessels; the other, much finer and perfectly white, after having been purged of all strange elements, well washed, and properly manipulated, was reserved for the "engobe," or covering, laid on the common ware, and for touching up majolica paintings. This latter clay was called *bianco allatato*, or milky white. Piccolpasso, our great authority on the subject, declares that by describing the processes of manufacture employed in all the Italian factories he is not disclosing the technical secrets belonging in proper to the majolists of his native town, which would be, says he, nothing short of treachery. Nevertheless, while transcribing that part of the original MS., G. Raffaelli, who had doubtless good cause for doing so, gives it as a correct account of the practical methods that were followed at Castel-Durante. We do not notice in any of the compositions of glazes and colours anything that differs much from the recipes used in other places.

When bent on separating examples of Castel-Durante ware from the confused crowd of contemporary majolica, one should chiefly depend on the character of the decoration. The following remarks apply, I need scarcely say, only to specimens of the best period. An almost infallible diagnosis is the presence of a light greenish grey, of particular softness, with which the shading of the figures is delicately graduated. One may recollect that at Faenza—at any rate at the outset—figures were shaded in light blue, and at Urbino the same work was executed in yellow or light brown. With regard to the other colours, we notice that the orange-yellow lacks something in intensity, and that the *Vergiliotto* red does not appear to have been known. Lustres are of rare occurrence, and if seen at all, they were, according to Piccolpasso, applied at Gubbio or elsewhere. The backs of the plates are not, as in the ware of other centres, usually pencilled with concentric circles or rough scrolls.

With the painters of Castel-Durante there is a prevalence of favourite subjects, not absolutely neglected in other centres,

but which they treated in a style of their own and adhered to with evident partiality. Of that kind I may mention the following examples: the "*amatori*" plates, showing the graceful and poetically inscribed presentment of some *Laura bella* or *diva Isabella*, which it was the artist's duty to paint in all the loveliness of the model; the decorations *a candelieri*, or trophies formed of masts, or candelabra loaded with arms and musical instruments, and animated with chimeras and fabulous animals. These trophies, inspired from the ornamental reliefs carved on the walls of the churches and palaces, are, generally, shaded with the peculiar greenish grey, a peculiarity almost equivalent to a certificate of origin. Typical are also the gadrooned pieces on which yellow boughs of oak foliage are reserved on a very dark blue ground. This style of ornamentation went by the name of *cerquato*, and had been chosen in honour of the reigning family of Della Rovere, who bore an oak tree in their arms.

A point which has not yet received sufficient attention on the part of the collectors is that each group of factories made it a speciality to supply the inhabitants of the district with the particular vessels of indigenous shape and special capacity the use of which was considered as obligatory as the preservation of the national costume. The names of these provincial vessels have come down to us. When we are able to apply these names to the right kind of shape, the identification of much of the so far unnamed pottery will be greatly facilitated. In the inventories of the fourteenth century we find mention of the "*piatti fatti in Pesaro*," the "*scudelli di Durante*," etc. A whole list of the vessels manufactured at Castel-Durante, with sizes, prices, and other particulars, is given by Raffaelli. He describes a kind of puzzle jug which was filled through a hole under the foot, and also the curious combination called the *impagliata*, a set of five or sometimes nine pieces, fitted together, and used to bring a repast to a bedridden person. It was composed as follows: the lower piece, which formed the stand, was a *bacini*, or broth bowl, to contain the soup; on the top of it was placed





**CASTEL-DURANTE.**

FIG. 37.—PLATE WITH A SHIELD OF ARMS, AND  
GRISAILLE BORDER.

*Salting Collection.*





the *tagliere*, a dish for the meat or the cooked fruit; this was covered by a reversed *ongaresca*, or deep soup-plate; finally, resting on the upturned foot of the *ongaresca* was a salt-cellar, the cover of which might be used as an egg-cup. A complete example of the *impagliata* is seldom met with, but portions of many a one are to be found scattered among various collections.

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#### URBINO

In the most picturesque part of the Umbrian country, ensconced between verdant slopes and rugged peaks, stands the small town from which the Urbino ware has derived its name. Many a city of the region was proud of its mountainous location; some of them had taken, as heraldic cognizance, a representation of the number of hills, from the foot of which tortuous streets climbed towards the grim fortress that frowned at the top. The arms of the townships of Urbino, Castel-Durante, and Gubbio bear clusters of three, four, or five thimble-shaped hills respectively. A curious object, merely ornamental, which may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is formed of three thimble-shaped lumps surmounted by one of a similar form. From its towering height the Castle of Urbino commands a view of thirteen lofty summits. The rocky landscapes that the majolist loved to display as a background to the classical figures he borrowed from engravings after the great masters were not, as it would seem, creations of his own imagination, but actual recollections of the surrounding scenery.

The establishment in the city of Urbino of a majolica works of exceptional scope was due to the fostering care and unstinted support of Duke Guidobaldo della Rovere. To the proximity of manufacturing centres of no mean importance

and long previously in regular operation, the new factory owed its immediate success. These centres supplied at the outset a rare selection of talented artists. But the development of a noble style of majolica decoration, unsurpassed in elegance of design as well as in delicacy of treatment, must be attributed to the influence exerted, even upon the most modest hand in the painting-shops, by the works of the divine Raffaello—the immortal *Urbinato*. I will not go so far as to say that he often favoured the vase-painters of his native town with his advice, still less that he ever tried his hand at painting in ceramic colours. Nevertheless, it remains a fact that Raffaello's subjects were, with obvious predilection, copied at Urbino, and that from the poise of the composition, the softening of the contours, and the fulness of the modelling of the graceful figures, one can detect in the work of many an obscure *vasai* the ambition of following in the steps of a worshipped master.

Letting other factories claim priority of existence, Urbino is, nevertheless, proud to show that, if its potters were not the first in the field, they were certainly at work at an early date. According to the civic records, one Giovanni di Donino Garducci was inscribed as a pot-maker in the year 1477. His production was doubtless nothing better than the coarse domestic ware glazed with lead, the staple article of manufacture of the period. There is, however, documentary evidence to show that in 1491 Giovanni Antonio and Francesco da Urbino had transformed their commonplace trade to the extent of being able to supply the archbishop's palace at Padua with a tile pavement of their own making, painted in the style of Faenza. One may assume that these two potters were members of the Donino family. In 1501, one sees Giovanni and Francesco di Donino (their name being given in full on that occasion) being entrusted with a commission for a *credenza* of majolica vessels intended for the household of Cardinal di Carpaccio. It was stipulated in the order that the *bacili* were to have the arms of the Cardinal blazoned in the centre, and that the *boccali* should be provided with



PLATE XXI.

URBINO.

Apollo and the Python, and Apollo seizing Daphne.

Arms of Isabella d'Este impaling those of her  
husband, Francesco de Gonzaga, Marquis of  
Mantua.

By NICOLA DA URBINO, 1525. (?)

*British Museum.*











**URBINO.**

FIG. 38. — PLATE WITH THE SUBJECT OF HERCULES  
AND OMPHALE, DATED 1522.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**URBINO.**

FIG. 39.—DISH WITH A GROUP OF FIGURES, AFTER  
MICHELANGELO'S CARTOON OF THE BATTLE  
OF PISA; WITH ARMS OF BEMBO.

*British Museum.*



covers surmounted by a small lion. Of these preliminary works and of those of the following period no traces have been left.

Meantime, the factories at work in the vicinity, Deruta, Pesaro, Gubbio, Castel-Durante, and other minor branches of the undetermined parental stock, had developed to their greatest extent, and reached the zenith of their fame. The Duke, who occasionally resided at Castel-Durante, used to visit the *botteghe* of the local potters, and was fond of following the progress of the ware in course of completion. Often he bestowed upon masters and men tokens of the interest he took in their welfare. It was, however, at Urbino that the mighty prince held his court. The most talented and ambitious exponents of a new style of artistic pottery understood that, to bask in the full sunshine of ducal favour, they had to settle permanently on the spot. Ideal conditions for the development of their art! There, within the gilded galleries of a hospitable palace, power, genius, and talent daily found themselves in close contact. One could see the proud nobleman courting the friendship of the celebrated artist who honoured the gathering by his presence, and the great painter fraternising with the humble craftsman whose unequalled ability had sanctioned his admittance into such an eclectic assembly. A majolist fortunate enough to have attracted the Duke's attention might fairly expect that by working directly under the eye of such an enlightened and generous Mæcenas he could plan and produce a succession of fictile masterpieces, confident that princely remuneration would reward his efforts.

Towards 1520 a group of talented majolica painters, originally at work at Castel-Durante, are found firmly established at Urbino. It is from this moment that the ware begins to assume a character of its own. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement that the factory in which the plain ware was fashioned and fired was established in the adjoining village of Fermignano. We have already seen that within a densely populated area, where the firing of potters'



ovens might have been a source of danger, their building was strictly prohibited. When ready, the biscuit ware was transported to the town to be glazed, painted, and baked in the easily controllable kiln attached to the majolists' *bottega*.

The capricious way in which the painters chose to modify their own name, each signing his work in different manners, has caused some difficulty in settling their identity. For instance, the family known at Castel-Durante as the Pelliparios become the Fontanas when they are fixed at Urbino. Guido Nicolo Pellipario, *figulo da Durante*, the head of the family, is to all appearances the same man who made himself famous under the name of Nicolo da Urbino. His son Guido, far from renouncing his origin, signs his first works Guido Durantino, to assume afterwards the name of Fontana. The fact that Nicola, or Nicolo, was working in a *bottega* established before 1520 by his son Guido is also perplexing. This latter had two sons, viz., Orazio Camillo, and Nicola the younger. Another Guido Durantino, son of Camillo, whose work denotes a much later period, is nevertheless sometimes confounded with Guido, son of Nicola Pellipario.

Sundry pieces authenticated by the presence of the full name of Nicolo da Urbino, or his monogram, and a few others which can be recognised as the anonymous work of the same hand, have made us acquainted with the style of one of the best painters of majolica in its second manner. Among the unmarked pieces of the earliest date attributable to this artist, one may place those which made part of a service bearing a shield with the arms of Isabella d'Este impaling those of Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, her husband. The latter having died in 1519, it is calculated that the painting of the service is anterior to that date. The specimens reproduced on Pl. XXI.-XXII. render a description unnecessary. The first work known to have been signed by Nicola the elder is a plate in the British Museum, representing "A Sacrifice to Diana." It is inscribed on the reverse: "NICOLA DA V." A complete similarity of treatment warrants the attribution

PLATE XXII.

URBINO.

Another Plate of the Gonzaga-Este Service.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*











**URBINO.**

FIG. 10.—VASE BY ORAZIO FONTANA

*British Museum.*





of the Gonzaga-Este service to the same painter. A broken but admirable plate in the Louvre, painted with a copy of Raffaello's "Parnassus," exhibits the same mannerism, and offers besides the large monogram which contains all the letters forming the name NICOLO. Varieties of the same monogram appear on a plate of the late collection Basilewski, representing a king seated on his throne, with the accompanying date 1521; also, on a large circular dish in the Bargello Museum at Florence, with the subject of the Martyrdom of Santa Cecilia and the full inscription "FATA IN BOTECA DE GVIDO DA CASTELLO DVRANTE IN VRBINO 1528." This last piece, somewhat inferior in finish and refinement, may on that account be regarded as being of a later date than the famous service of the Correr Museum at Venice, now also attributed by common assent to Nicolo Fontana. He died towards 1550.

The Guido Durantino who has just been mentioned as the owner of a *bottega* at Urbino, and the father of the painter of the Bargello dish, is indifferently known as Guido Fontana. In fact, D. Fortnum refers to a plate bearing the inscription "FATTO IN VRBINO IN BOTECA DI M<sup>o</sup> GVIDO FONTANA"; while one of the pieces of the dispersed service, blazoned with the arms of Constable of Montmorency, has, with the dates 1533 and 1535, the mark "M<sup>o</sup> GVIDO DVRANTINO IN VRBINO." The same date, 1533, occurs on two odd plates of the service of Cardinal Duprat in the Louvre and the Sèvres Museums. All these last examples, each offering marked differences in the treatment, betray the employment of a number of hands in Guido's painting-shop. The multiplicity of important majolica services, executed in that establishment for the kings and princes of all countries, shows how far and wide had spread the reputation of the master. The year 1576 is given as the date of his death.

Orazio Fontana had studied his art under Taddeo Zuccherò before joining the *bottega* of his father as a majolica painter. The whole family appears to have united in the production of a most refined ware, but the work of Orazio alone would have

been sufficient to render for ever memorable the name of Urbino, with which his own is closely associated. His pieces are seldom marked otherwise than by an indication of the *bottega*, but he is made responsible for the painting of the finest work issued from that of his father or the one he opened on his own account in 1565. A few examples are known of a monogram which includes all the letters of his name. It occurs on a plate in the British Museum, with the subject of "The Chase of the Calydonian Boar." Orazio contributed to the execution of the splendid services previously alluded to. To those I have mentioned may be added the services given by the Duke Guidobaldo II. to Charles V. and Philip II. of Spain; a portion of this latter may be seen in the Madrid Museum. To him also were due the magnificent vases that Duchess Vittoria Farnese presented to her uncle Cardinal Farnese. From Orazio's *bottega* came the series of 380 vases and drug-pots intended for the Duke's *spezieria* at Urbino, and which were at a later time presented to the Santa Casa at Loretto. Some pieces which unite with uncommon dimensions a rare perfection of treatment, most frequently decorated with the "Grotesques" ornaments in the antique taste, and of the style sanctioned by Raffaello for the decoration of the *Loggies*, bear the inscription: "FATO IN VRBINO IN BOTEGA DI ORAZIO FONTANA."

Francesco Xanto Aveli da Rovigo, a contemporary of the Fontanas, appears to have worked at Urbino as an independent majolist. He was not a *maestro*, and therefore could not have a factory of his own and employ assistants; neither do we see his name connected with any of the noted *bottegas* of the town. Nothing, however, could prevent him from keeping a small kiln, in which he fired the ware obtained from a manufacturer and which he decorated with his own hand. He seldom failed to mark his work with his full name or his initials. Sometimes the signs of Maestro Giorgio or of his successors occur in connection with his mark. This is an indication that the brilliant metallic lustres with which the painting is enriched had been added



PLATE XXIII.

URBINO.

Perseus and Andromeda.

*Salting Collection.*











**URBINO.**

FIG. 41.—PLAQUE WITH THE SUBJECT OF ST. JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS PAINTING ATTRIBUTED TO ORAZIO FONTANA, LUSTRES BY M<sup>re</sup> GIORGIO.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**URBINO.**

FIG. 42.—PLATE PAINTED BY FRANCESCO XANTO,  
WITH ROMULUS AND REMUS; LUSTRED  
AT GUBBIO.

*British Museum.*





**URBINO.**

FIG. 43.—PLATEAU BY ORAZIO FONTANA

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





at Gubbio. Xanto was particularly fond of historical subjects, which he presented as original creations, but which are found on analysis to be composed of odd figures borrowed from different sources, grouped together with some ability. In execution his work differs from the grace and tenderness of treatment and the subdued tints affected by the Fontanas, in the constant presence of a brutal outline aggravated by the unseemly contrast of violent and crude colours. The painter was also a poet; the description of a subject at the back of a plate is occasionally accompanied with verses extracted from his own poems. Francesco Xanto has signed more pieces, good, bad, or indifferent, than any other majolica painter. His dated work extends from 1530 to 1542.

Another master, Guido Merlingo, or Merlini, or Nerglio, has signed with this variety of spelling some dishes of inferior quality. Upon one of them we read "FATE IN BOTECA DI GUIDO MERLINGO VASARO DA VRBINO IN SAN POLO A DI 30 DI MARZIO 1542." The works of the Fontanas also stood in the Borgo San Polo.

A plate in the Berlin Museum, painted with a view of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, and inscribed "FATTO IN VRBINO DEL 1575...GERONIMO D. TOMASO," foretells the complete decadence of the art.

The family of the Patanazzi did what they could to make the majolica industry subsist for a time at Urbino, but they could not save it from decline and final extinction. They possessed the Fontana's tradition; they used their best moulds, and imitated the Grotesques on white ground which had been for the old masters an inexhaustible source of success. But there was no more a Duke of Urbino to patronise the potters, royal personages did not care any more for "historied" services, and ware of a truly superior order could not be produced with the stinted support that might be expected from the middle classes. Yet the pieces decorated by Alfonso Patanazzi, first of the name, might have led one to expect that a fair standard of manufacture would be maintained, for a short time at least. To this the vases with serpent handles in the

Spitzer collection, signed and dated 1580, may bear witness. The mark "ALF. P. F. VRBINI 1616" is seen on a dish by the same painter, in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Francesco, another member of the Patanazzi family, had still some pretension at making pieces "*di pompa*": "1608 VRBINI EX FIGLINA FRANCISCI PATANI" is pencilled on a large cistern of the Fontaine collection. Still very effective at a distance, this coarse and vulgar imitation of one of the Fontana masterpieces cannot, however, stand close examination. Gradually the execution becomes weaker and weaker, until all pretence at artistic decoration was abandoned. The last we hear of the Patanazzi is in connection with young Vincenzio, who, in 1620, then being thirteen years of age, was already painting majolica—and this, according to those who have seen his work, in a most detestable manner.

I may finally mention, without further comment, the factory established at Urbino in 1773 by one Monsieur Rolet.

We have seen that it was not long before 1520 that the Pelliparios, a family of experienced majolists, had left Castel-Durante to import their art into Urbino. All technical difficulties had by that time been overcome in the manufacture of majolica. So it was on firm foundations that the newcomers grounded a course of improvements which were to win universal reputation for their ware. Out of the finest materials obtainable, bodies and glazes were scientifically compounded. The opaque tin-enamel was of the purest white. Still, to enhance its brilliancy and give more sheen to the colours, the finished piece, having been coated over with a vitreous glaze, was once more passed through the kiln. From the exceptional beauty of the surface one can recognise at a glance an example of Urbino majolica. This quality induced the adoption of a particular style of decoration in which the white ground plays a conspicuous part. The primitive taste of ornamentation, depending chiefly on the contrasting effects of deeply coloured fields in bands or compartments, was gradually given up. Purely ornamental motives and paintings of topical





**URBINO.**

FIG. 44.—GROUP, "THE ORGAN-PLAYER."

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*



interest made room for a somewhat pedantic selection of mythological and historical scenes which afforded scope for the display of classical erudition, a knowledge of antiquity being then very fashionable. When the best period of manufacture arrived, the artistic treatment of the figure subjects had reached such perfection that we can almost understand how it came to pass that the enthusiastic admirers of some select specimens jumped to the conclusion that they were painted by Raffaello himself. The talented modeller had from the first been called upon to take his share in the preparation of very important pieces, in order to create original and elegant forms, to replace the traditional *boccali*, *albarelli*, *fruterie*, and the other domestic vessels so far found sufficient. The occasional production of a religious or humorous group in polychrome was perhaps the outcome of the artist's own fancy. These are of rare occurrence. We show, however, in Fig. 44, an interesting example of the kind. It is particularly in the fancy shapes of the ornamental pieces that the modeller reveals the resources of his imagination. Not a few large vases with elaborate handles and architectonic pedestals, oval cisterns, and three-lobed vessels of unusual proportions, ewers and candelabra of curious workmanship, are still preserved in the royal palaces of Europe, where they arrived more than three centuries ago as a present sent to the reigning sovereign by one of the Dukes of Urbino. The superiority of the ware is strikingly attested by these incomparable examples. They are usually decorated with delicate traceries, elegantly curved stems, and convoluted scrolls, bearing rosettes and foliage, amphoræ and masks, arms and trophies, etc., graceful conceits inspired from the frescoes discovered in the ruins of Roman grottoes, the style of which had been renovated, under the name of "Grotesche," by Johan of Udine and Pierino del Vaga. This scheme leaves the milky white of the ground appearing within the intricacies of the design, except in the places where small panels have been reserved for the introduction of minute figure subjects, always painted with the utmost care and accuracy. The successful effect of the whole depends on harmonious



arrangements of lines rather than on striking combinations of colour (Pl. XXIV.).

All this is far removed, it is true, from the robust and amazing vigour of the majolica of Faenza and Cafaggiolo, which I could never praise highly enough. But even the *intransigent* worshipper of what I might call the pre-Urbinate ware may feel his intended criticism silenced when he contemplates the charming *morbidesse* of a choice example of the art of the Fontanas.

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#### CITTÀ DI CASTELLO

In Città di Castello, the ancient seat of a very extensive fabrication of common pottery, that of enamelled ware is said never to have been introduced. On the authority of Piccolpasso—who calls a dish with a decoration incised in the clay a work "*alla Castellana*"—the locality has often been referred to, if not as the birthplace of the ware of that kind, at any rate as the place to which most of the specimens of it could be attributed. Castello, or the neighbouring village of La Fratta, may have been known at one time for the "*graffito*" ware, of the production of which they made a speciality, but it would be quite unfair to ignore that it was made in many other places.

From north to south, from east to west of the Italian land, the last excavations conducted in the regions where the making of pottery was to develop into a great and prosperous industry have confirmed the result of previous investigations. They have proved that the method of covering with a thin layer

of white clay a vessel made of a red one, and incising a rude pattern into it by means of a pointed tool, was almost everywhere one of the earliest devices imagined by the peasant potter bent on rendering his work more attractive to the eye. Consequently, the "*graffito*" or "scratched" ware of the dawning days of ceramic improvement is ubiquitous. The older examples of the kind, often older in date than any other ornamented pottery, are of incomparable interest from the historical point of view. Completed by the application of transparent glazes of various colours, the most elaborate specimens decorated in that manner claim our attention by their truly artistic merit. A genuine feeling pervades the rude workmanship. They exhibit a whimsicality, a freshness of invention in the subjects represented, seldom to be found in wares of much higher pretensions. The free sketch, evidently improvised for a special occasion and not destined to be repeated, is traced by an untutored hand. It is by no means entirely admirable, and yet it is none the less captivating. It puts you in mind of a vulgar handicraft on the road to the perfection of a noble art; of an obscure operative who might have been a great artist. What more I could say on that point will be more clearly expressed by the reproduction of the dishes given in Figs. 3-4.

In all cases where we are dealing with an uninscribed example of a technical process, so simple in the means employed, and yet so varied in the effects obtained, an attribution to Città di Castello or any other place is a matter of sheer impossibility. If we venture to assign to La Fratta the embossed plate represented on Fig. 28, it is on account of the peculiar quality of the brown clay with which it is made: it is, therefore, not much more than a conjectural opinion.

## BORGIO SAN SEPOLCRO

Before establishing at Urbino, in 1773, a "*fabbrica di majolica fina*," that is to say, English earthenware, Monsieur M. Rolet had tried his fortune, apparently with little success, at

Borgo San Sepolcro. A tall lamp with four nozzles, made of white ware, painted with garlands of flowers in colours, and inscribed "CITTA BORGO S. SEPOLCRO A 6 FEBBRAIO 1771. MART ROLETUS FECIT," is all that remains of his stay in that town, where there is nothing to prove that he had a factory. This piece is in the Sèvres Museum.



## V

### VENETIAN STATES

VENICE—PADUA—TREVISO—BASSANO—NOVE—MURANO—  
CANDIANA—VERONA

#### VENICE

So great was the facility that wealthy Venice had for obtaining, through her oversea trade, the finest earthen vessels produced in foreign countries, that we may wonder why anyone should ever have taken the trouble to found there a pottery works of any importance. So much was the lusted ware of the Moors in favour with the Venetians that, in 1437, when the magistrates, hoping to protect in this way a local industry as yet unborn, prohibited the entrance of all foreign pottery even into the Gulf of Venice, they made an exception in respect of *i lavori di Majorica*, and other pots that came *da Valenza*, which were to be admitted free of duty.

Little importance should be attached, having regard to the advanced conditions of the potters' trade in mediæval times, to the discovery of the statutes by which the craft had been regulated since the year 1300. The *scudellari*, as they were then called, became *boccalari* at the end of the century, which we may take as implying that to the vulgar making of pans and basins they had added the more refined one of jars and pitchers. All that was, however, of a very coarse description, as is attested by the fragments unearthed when some excavations were in progress on the Piazza San Marc. For a long time there was evidently no demand for superior productions. A deep-rooted preference for the imported articles can alone be

deemed accountable for the backward state in which majolica manufacture was slumbering at Venice, while it flourished so briskly in the other Italian States. We know what could be expected from the craftsman of the Lagunes when we think of the incomparable marvels of glass-making that came out of his hand. There he felt himself the master of an art to which all cultured Europe remained tributary, and all his efforts were centred on the improvement of his art.

We hear of beautiful ware supplied, in 1489, by one Matteo d'Alviso, of Faenza, to the Doge Agostino Barbarigo, but we are also told of similar goods having been seized and broken by the Procurator when the dealer attempted to expose them for sale on the market-place; a fact strongly suggestive of the Faentine having tried on that occasion to evade the decree which forbade the introduction of foreign pottery. While mentioning the superb tile pavements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, still extant in Venice, I had to endorse the general opinion that they must have been painted in Faenza. Neither can the fine roundels in enamelled terra-cotta, which adorn the church of Giobbe, be considered as being of local manufacture; all experts in the matter attribute the work to one of the members of the Della Robbia family, and give Florence as the probable place of origin.

To be ranged among the still imperfectly understood documentary records referring to a period that cannot be illustrated by a single irrefutable example, is the order for some *piadenette di preta* of Venice and of Faenza, sent, in 1518, by the Duchess Isabella d'Este, through the agent of her husband, Gonzaga Marquis of Mantua; and also the commission for the making of sundry articles of Murano glass, and a set of drug-pots for the ducal pharmacy, of which Alfonso I., Duke of Ferrara, entrusted the superintendence to Titian in 1520. In what proportions did the local majolica (if there was any at the time) enter into the completion of these indefinite orders, all executed through the enterprise of a merchant, is a point not easily determined. Faenza is mentioned in every one of these documents. One must bear in



mind that from 1501 the town of Faenza had fallen under the sway of the Venetian Republic. A close commercial intercourse was undoubtedly maintained with the Emilian city, the productions of which, notwithstanding the ancient protectionist decrees still in force, were, by special favour, granted free admission in 1503.

Towards 1540, as soon as an improved art showed signs of being firmly established, a crowd of majolists in search of work began to flock into Venice. The list of their names and of the places they came from, compiled by Urbani de Gheltof, is interesting to peruse. Of that list I append the following extract:—

Baldassaro dei Baldassini, of Pesaro.

Comino and Battista di Girardo Fontana, of Urbino.

Marino and his son Andrea, of Urbino.

Olivieri, of Florence.

Vincenzo Gabellotto and Giovanni Maria, of Faenza.

Angelo and Matteo, of Treviso.

Baldassare Marforio, of Castel-Durante, etc.

From the promiscuous association of such extraneous talents, the artistic output of the *bottega* in which the men had to work together was bound to differ in character from all the recognised styles of decoration; and, in fact, a careful examination of the few authenticated examples of Venetian majolica will soon enable the student to recognise any specimen of the same origin that may come in his way.

So far, the tenor of old documents of uncertain interpretation has been our sole guidance. Misconception is at an end when we come to deal with marked and dated specimens. A few of these shall here be passed under review.

The earliest one is dated 1540. It is a dish in the Ashmolean Museum; D. Fortnum gives a reproduction of it. In the central part is the figure of a mermaid; on the background are small Venetian buildings standing in the sea. The main subject is framed with an ornamental border which recalls the patterns of the contemporary brocaded silks. The dish



is simply inscribed with a date: "1540. A.D: 16 DEL MEXE DE OTVBRE." Another dish of greater importance, for its size as well as for its elaborate decoration formed of intricate entwinings of branches of oak with ornamental scrolls—a piece apparently painted by the same hand as the one just described, and preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum—supplies the name and the address of the maker. It bears the mark "IN VENETIA IN CONTRADA DI SANTO POLO IN BOTECA DI M<sup>o</sup>. LODOWICO" (Fig. 45). The technical treatment is peculiar and may be taken as typical of the Venetian manufacture. Of similar character, but of inferior execution, is the dish, in the same museum, which has medallions of women introduced into a scheme of Venetian arabesques, with the unexplained inscription "Ao LASDINR," and the date 1543. To the same period, if not to a still earlier one, may be assigned the dish in the Salting collection, reproduced in Fig. 46; also the series of dishes with the coats of arms of German families, dispersed among the Cassel and Nuremberg Museums, the Spitzer and Zschille collections; one of them, with the Imhof arms, is dated 1548. M<sup>o</sup>. Jacomo the elder was established as a *boccalario* in 1515, the date of his death. It is, no doubt, to his son that we should attribute the dish, in private hands, marked "IN VENETIA A SAN BARNABA IN BOTECA DI M<sup>o</sup>. JACOMO DA PESARO." The same name occurs on a plate of the Castellani collection, and on one in the Louvre, dated 1548.

Piccolpasso, who wrote in 1550, describes the visit he made to a factory conducted by Francesco di Pieragnolo del Vasaro, and his father-in-law Gianantonio da Pesaro, who had come from Castel-Durante. He says that their oven was of a larger size than any that had been constructed before, and that their production was considerable in artistic as well as in popular ware.

Venetian majolica had by that time acquired a widespread renown. It was to Venice that the German potter A. Hirschvogel repaired to learn the secrets of the stanniferous enamel. In their application to the magistrates of the town of Lyons in 1575, the Faentine Julian Gambyn and Domenico Tardessir



**VENICE.**

FIG. 45.—DISH PAINTED IN BLUE CAMAÏEU AND  
INSCRIBED: IN VENETIA IN CONTRADA DI  
ST. POLO, IN BOTEGÀ DI M<sup>o</sup> LODOWICO.  
*Victoria and Albert Museum.*







**VENICE.**

FIG. 46.—DISH, PAINTED IN BLUE, WITH THE  
SUBJECT OF HERCULES AND ANTEUS,  
AFTER MANTEGNA.

*Salting Collection.*





**VENICE.**

FIG. 47.—DISH, DATED 1550.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





expose their intention of manufacturing faïence "after the fashion of Venice."

In the Brunswick Museum two companion plates, painted with biblical subjects within rich ornamental borders, are inscribed, respectively, "1568 ZENER DOMENICO DA VENECIA FECIT IN LA BOTEGA AL PONTE SITO DAL ANDAR A SAN PAOLO," and "DOMENICO BECER FECI. 1568."

During the next century all connection with the old majolica style was definitely severed. All shapes are showily loaded with heavy reliefs; all subjects affect a pictorial character, landscapes greatly predominating. The mark of an anchor, or a fish-hook combined with the letters AF, is seen on pieces of that period.

In 1628 the ware of Venice was allowed to be sold at the Padua fair. So miserable had become the conditions of the trade that, in 1664, the guild of the potters—then reduced, masters and men, to thirty members, all told—addressed a petition to the Senate, asking that the old decree which prohibited the introduction of foreign pottery should be strictly enforced. After that time the potting industry, which was gradually leaving the town, was transported and carried on with indifferent success at Nove, Bassano, and Murano.

In quality of body and glaze the Venetian majolica is not inferior to any of its prototypes. The clay was, it is said, imported from Pesaro. *Vasaros* who had gained experience in the most celebrated schools had assisted in the formation of a new one. None of these practical leaders, however, seems to have been fully acquainted with the preparation of a complete palette. One might have expected that in the land of Crivelli, Giorgione, and Titian the foremost preoccupation of the local majolist would have been to emulate these great colourists, and obtain on his ware powerful and harmonious effects of colour. Whether it was deliberate choice, or sheer incapacity on the part of the maker, his work, on the contrary, is always recognisable by a certain dulness and monotony of aspect. The influence of the white and blue Oriental ware—evidently imitated, but with entire freedom—is not quite

responsible, as one might think, for the use of a single colour. In his later attempts at indulging in chromatic schemes, the Venetian potter disclosed his unconquered shortcomings.

In the monochrome works of M<sup>o</sup>. Lodovico, one of which is dated 1540, a particular method is distinctly embodied. It is grounded on the combination of the *berretino* and the *sopra bianco* of Faenza. Upon a ground of a bluish half-tint, the whole ornamentation is traced and shaded in dark blue, and ultimately heightened with sharp touches of opaque white, the *bianco di Ferrara*. This modified application of the processes is not seen presented in its exact form on any other ware, except on a few specimens attributed to Paduan manufacture. From the artistic standpoint, the Lodovico dishes strike one as being essentially Venetian in taste. Composed of ingenious intricacies of intertwined branches and elegant scrolls, the designs differ so much from the classical grotesques and arabesques then adopted everywhere else, that they suggest the work of some independent artist, a man quite conversant with the drawing of ornamental patterns, but with no previous connection with the potter and his art. This kind of ware is usually referred to under the name of *lattesini*, a term derived from *lattesino* (indigo), the colour of which was recalled by the decoration in cobalt.

In the second manner of the Venetian majolist, and in agreement with the artistic tendencies of the moment, all the traditions of the Renaissance are broadly discarded, to make room for the application to pottery decoration of picturesque landscapes and rustic scenes, so far reserved to the oil painter. The shapes lose all symmetry of proportion and grace of outline. Obviously imitated from vessels of hammered copper or chased silver, they are inordinately scalloped at the edges, gadrooned on the body, and convoluted in the foot. Novelty and extravagance are their sole recommendation. The technical treatment of the painting preserves, however, something of its pristine character. It is the same ground of a bluish half-tint on which the subject, shaded in dark blue, is lightened up by touches of opaque white. But the whole is, in addition, partially



coloured with washes of light green, lemon-yellow, and a purple of discordant harshness. The execution is light and spirited.

The majolica of Venice may be regarded as having headed the invasion of the rococo taste, and of the decadent style that was to reign supreme in the Italian productions of the following period.

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### PADUA

The quantity and variety of fragments of pottery brought to light through the excavations conducted by V. Lazari, of the Correr Museum, in the Via dei Boccari at Padua, tells us that a fair number of pot-works once stood grouped on the spot. Included in the find were parts of coarse *bacini*, the like of which are known to belong to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; jugs of white slip-washed ware with inscriptions in Gothic characters; and numerous examples with blue and polychrome paintings, so similar in character to the earliest productions of Faenza that to discriminate between the two seems practically impossible.

An admirable *graffito* disc was found inserted, in conjunction with triangular white and blue tiles, into the walls of a house of the same street. It has its place marked among the best pieces of the kind so improperly called *mezza-majolica*. It represents the Holy Virgin and Child enthroned under a richly ornamented canopy; the figures of San Roch and Santa Lucia stand on each side; flights of cherubs and groups of angels complete the composition. The subject was incised in the clay, after a design by the painter Nicolo Pizzoto by one NICOLETTI, who has signed his name in a small cartel.

The piece is now in the civic museum. Despite promising beginnings, the development of a local art appears to have been regrettably interfered with. No other standard pieces have ever turned up to determine for us the style of manufacture followed during the first part of the sixteenth century. Among the dated specimens of the second period we find nothing but inferior imitations of the *lattesini*, the white and blue ware of Venice, then at the height of its success. It has been thought possible to identify the Paduan majolica by the occurrence of a mark in the shape of a cross often found on specimens of fully ascertained origin.

The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses two dishes, one with the Flight of Myrrha, the other with Curtius leaping into the Gulf, dated 1548 and 1550 respectively. The last date occurs also on a plate in the British Museum, representing Cæsar being shown the head of Pompey; upon another, with Polyphemus and Galatea, the date 1564 is accompanied with a cross and the words "A PADOVA." A comparison of all the above examples with genuine Venetian work awakes the idea of a miserable trade competition conducted by some minor works against a large and prosperous one. We recognise the costly article being pirated and supplied at a reduced price. In all the Paduan examples we find the imitation of the bluish-grey enamel, the outlining of the subject in dark blue, and the touching up with opaque white. In short, they show the technique of the Venetian majolica, but none of its delicacy and refinement of execution.

Till late in the eighteenth century, the two-handled drug-jars were still made in some nameless factory of Padua. This style of ware was called "*alla Padovana*"; it was painted with flowers in white relief upon a light blue ground.

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## TREVISO

Seldom has a paragraph of the nature of the following one been quoted as throwing a favourable light on the case in point. T. Garzoni, in his work, *La Piazza Universale*, 1585, says: "Do not let yourselves be gulled into the belief that the ware made at Treviso sells everywhere as majolica from Faenza; because there is a great difference between puff-balls and truffles, as everybody knows."

Having transcribed such a passage, a modern author would be warranted in dismissing peremptorily the study of a ware so irreverently treated by one of its contemporaries. Yet every notice of Treviso goes on with the description of a problematical dish painted in the Faenza style. The piece might be attributed to the Trevisian factories on account of the inscription which ends "A TREVISO. 1538," were it not that the name of the town seems to have been introduced to indicate the residence of the party to whom the piece had been presented, and not the place of manufacture. A few other unsatisfactory scraps of information, being the only thing available, will doubtless be repeated over and over again until we can obtain better ones. Many specimens of popular pottery have been assigned to Treviso, but without a shadow of authority.

Much more industrial than artistic in its trend was the factory established in the suburb of La Fiera, in 1766, by G. Rossi di Stefano. He failed in 1771, and was succeeded by G. M. Ruberti, to whom some previous privileges were confirmed in 1777. Porcelain was made at Treviso by G. Fontebasso, from about 1800 to 1862.

## BASSANO

About 1540, Simone Marinoni, a master potter who had come from Pesaro, is known to have established one pot-works in the suburbs of Bassano, and another at Angarano, in close vicinity. An inkstand in the shape of a human foot, decorated in colours, and marked "J.G.F.R. 1569 BASANO,"



formerly in the Castellani collection, and a plate of very poor execution, signed "S. M. 1595," represent his style of manufacture.

Later on, the three brothers Manardi were making the national *lattesini*, not without success. The prosperity of their establishment coincides with the decline of the Venice factories. In 1669 they obtained a first privilege for the making of majolica after the fashion of Faenza and Lodi; and a second one, in 1698, for the imitation of the Genoese ware. If the Manardis' productions had anything original in them it was certainly not the fault of the makers, who kept to a prudent reproduction of the successful types. After their death, which occurred in 1705, the works passed into the hands of their two sisters. The Morellis, a family of potters in the locality, profiting by the occasion, started, in opposition, the manufacture of the superior articles which had so far been the Manardis' speciality.

The sisters, who took an active part in the management of the business, called G. A. Caffo, a clever potter, to their assistance, and under his direction the works were reorganised. Bartolomeo and Antonio Terchj, from Rome, already well known as good majolica painters, were engaged for two years. Bartolomeo painted landscapes, and Antonio figures. Some examples of the work they executed at Bassano are signed with their full names. We find them, a few years afterwards, working at Rome again, at Siena, and at San Quirico. In 1737, Caffo severed his connection with the sisters Manardi, and started, at his own risk, on a similar line of manufacture. Both establishments lingered a few years, and quietly came to an end.

At Angarano, a small pot-works, conducted by Baldasare Marinoni, a descendant of the old potter of that name, dragged out its unprofitable existence until 1779. At that time one of the Antonibons removed his business from Nove to Bassano. A happy marriage soon united the two families, and the two factories were joined into one, which never ceased to prosper. It is still in the hands of their descendants.

One might write a small volume on the vicissitudes of the Bassano and Nove majolica works. Historical and anecdotic information is not wanting, but we all feel that an attractive and superior ware would form a much better subject of study than these dry particulars. To profit by such an alternative is, however, not within our power. We must take the Bassano ware as it is, a sort of attenuated reflection of the styles of Genoa and Castelli. A plate in the Louvre, with the Flight of Lot and his Daughters, is signed "*Antonio Terchj in Bassano*"; another, with a landscape, bears "*B. Terchj in Bassano.*" They represent exceptional articles of production. All the rest is painted in blue, with sketchy flowers or landscapes, by common hands. The ware, sometimes enriched with gilding, is marked, on the best specimens, with a five-pointed crown.

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## NOVE

Nove, or Le Nove, is but a suburb of Bassano. Much of the white and blue ware which might be considered as belonging to the last period of the Venetian manufacture comes in reality from those twin cities. Giovanni Battista Antonibon had established there a factory of common pottery in 1689. Having distinguished himself a few years later by the manufacture of an excellent majolica ware, he petitioned the Senate, in 1732, for permission to establish a depôt and a sale-room in Venice, a favour which was at once granted to him. His son and successor, Pasquale Antonibon, gave a still greater development to the business. The shop in Venice had become insufficient; a second one was added to it in



1741. Great attention was given to the improvement of the technical processes, and the best artists of the time were engaged. The talent of *Il Cecchetto* was particularly appreciated. Pasquale was a man of great ambition and rare energy. An interesting chapter in the industrial history of Nove is that which relates to the ordeals the master had to go through before he succeeded in producing a hard porcelain of good quality. Giovanni Maria Baccin, late manager of the Antonibon factory, started, in association with Gio Battista Viero, of Bassano, a factory which acquired some notoriety for the figures and groups, of which Domenico Bosello furnished the models. In 1780 the Nove works was put under the management of F. Paolin, of Bassano, and in 1802 it was leased by one Baroni, who worked it with the assistance of French and German artists. The Antonibons again took possession of the factory in 1824, and have not relinquished it up to this day. Great partiality was shown at Nove for picturesque pieces modelled in the shape of fishes, shells, vegetables, etc. The mark is the word "NOVE."

### MURANO

A few lines will suffice to give its due to the majolica of Murano. In 1752 the brothers Bertolini had just failed in their attempt to imitate porcelain with opaque glass, when they decided to put up an oven for the manufacture of ornamental pottery. On their application to the Senate, they obtained the privilege that their products should be admitted free of taxes and duties into Venice, and they were also granted leave to open a retail shop in the town. Sadly deficient in practical knowledge, they could never master the elementary difficulties of manufacture. To the end, the ware remained miserable in quality. The enamel, imperfectly melted, was rough and dull. It was clumsily painted over, in very poor colours, with would-be Japanese patterns. After ten years of fruitless trials, all privileges having been withdrawn from them, the brothers returned to their trade of glass-making.



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## CANDIANA

Candiana, a poor village in the district of Padua, is remembered by historians as the site of an ancient abbey. But, before Urbani de Gheltot discovered that the making of pottery had been carried out on the spot, ceramic writers had been led to believe that there was no such a place as Candiana. A plausible interpretation was ready to explain the presence of that name on some specimens: it was simply another form of the word "*Candia*," whence the ware had presumably been imported into Italy. The decoration, which consists of an arrangement of carnation flowers, roses, and foliage, and suggests a distant imitation of the Syrian or Rhodian faïence, gave weight to the theory.

The pot-works of Candiana—of which nothing else is known—was in existence in 1604. In that year, Padre Pietro da Verona, one of the monks at the monastery, writes to a friend who occupied a high position in Padua, asking that he would use his influence in favour of three of his local potters, one a turner and the two others painters, and find for them employment in the town. The writer gives a sad picture of the conditions of the potting trade in the village, saying that the men could not sell their work or make a living out of it.

The Sèvres Museum has one specimen, marked "CANDIANA, 1620"; another, in private hands, is dated 1637. Three unmarked pieces, easily recognisable by the quasi-Rhodian character of the decoration, are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The ware is scarce and curious enough to make any collector of ceramic rarities anxious to possess an example of it.

## VERONA

Like many other towns in which the majolica manufacture has existed but scarcely thriven, Verona had its factory of

painted pottery. Piccolpasso mentions it. An armorial dish, cleverly painted with the "Clemency of Alexander," in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is inscribed "1563 A DI GENARO GIV. GIOVANNI BATTISTA DA FAENZA IN VERONA. M."

Something more than a unique specimen is required before a notice can be written on the Verona majolica, and indications given for identification of further examples of it.

## VI

### NORTHERN PROVINCES

FERRARA—ESTE—PARMA—MODENA—SASSUOLO—REGGIO—  
SAN POSSIDONIO—MANTUA

#### FERRARA

TRULY Ferrara and her potters have not left any work that approaches in quality and in importance the productions of Faenza, Cafaggiolo, or Urbino, yet the mere mention of the name is welcome as bringing back to memory the golden age of majolica. When flourishing under the exalted patronage of the Dukes, the art—still a novel art—of painting, upon a shining enamel, attractive subjects in indelible colours was in the full exercise of its prestige. The favourite majolist was at Court a person of importance. He resided at the Castle, and took rank as a permanent officer in the ducal household. We like to imagine him, dressed in a fur-lined doublet, and with a sword hanging at his side—just as Maestro Giorgio Andreoli is represented in his portrait—submitting to the magnificent Duke Ercole I. his scheme for the making of some incomparable service on which all the chief events of Roman history should be artistically depicted. His Grace has heard of marvels of the kind having been executed for the rulers of some other Italian States, and he does not intend to be surpassed in splendour by any of his rivals. Work must begin at once, and as the *boccalari* of the town would be of no use for the realisation of this project, the best hands from Faenza and Castel-Durante are enticed into his service.

Under the auspices of the Duke Ercole, and, it is said, with his personal participation in some of the experiments,



majolica of a superior order was unquestionably made at Ferrara. His successors seem to have inherited the interest he took in the continuation and improvement of the manufacture. Strange to say, not one of the pieces produced under such favourable circumstances has ever been identified. We feel sure, however, that they cannot be lost. Confounded with the Faenza and the Urbino ware, many of them now stand unrecognised in the public and private majolica collections in which they are stranded.

Until some means is found to establish the true identity of many misnamed examples, the best way of advancing the study is to make ourselves acquainted with the long roll of documentary evidence which relates to the various phases of the history of ceramics in Ferrara.

The local potter makes an early appearance in the old records. In the expenses-book of Leonello, Marchese of Ferrara, at the date 1443, are entered the payments made to one Bastiano, *boccalaro*, for the supply of some painted tiles. It is stated that the designs, representing fruits, foliage, and vegetables, had been furnished by Sagramoro. The tiles were to be inserted into the benches placed on the herb market. The draft remains of a commission given to Ludovico Corradino, of Modena, in 1471, for providing tile pavements in two rooms of the Schifanoia Palace. Three years after, a new chapel having been erected and consecrated in the ducal residence, Ariosto, who described the building, praises the tile pavement with which it was adorned.

About 1490, Fra Melchiorre, who, with his son, had come from Faenza by command of the Duke, was appointed "*maestro dei lavori di terra*"—a title which would imply the establishment of some pottery works—and installed at the Castle.

The names of a few masters and craftsmen, apparently associated with the labours of Melchiorre, have been preserved to us. They are as follows:—

Ottavia da Faenza, who furnished sets of earthen vessels to the nuns of the convent of *Corpo di Christo* in 1493.

Giovanni da Modena, whose name appears in 1501 in connection with the making of enamelled terra-cotta stoves which, according to the German fashion, were to be put up at the Castle.

Biagio di Faenza, who supplied with earthen pots the new monastery of Santa Catterina in the years 1502-3, and whom we find occupied in tiling the "*stufa*," or vapour-bath room, at the Castel Nuovo in 1505-6.

Christoforo da Modena was then "*boccalaro ducale*." To him the Duchesse Lucrezia Borgia gave an order, in 1507, for covering with coloured tiles the roof of a small *loggia*.

We may assume, not without cause, that supplying the Court, the surrounding convents and the religious congregations with useful earthenware was not the main purpose for which potters' kilns and workshops had been established in the ducal Castle; the conduct of systematic experiments for the improvement of the art must have been the object that the Prince had in view.

Marchese Campori, to whose researches we owe the larger part of our historical information, has published a significant document, which, enigmatic as its particular import remains, supports the assumption of the works having been of an experimental character. It would appear that, in 1494, Isabella d'Este, daughter of Ercole I., and wife of Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, had sent a broken plate to Ferrara, to have it mended by the "*maestri*" at work in the Castle. In returning the repaired article to the noble Isabella, Francesco Bagnacavallo, secretary to the Duchess of Ferrara, wrote that, by order of his mistress, he was having made six pieces of a special kind of pottery, which, when ready, would be sent to Mantua for her kind acceptance. Next come a few words descriptive of the nature of these pieces, better calculated to confuse than to assist us in estimating what they could possibly have been. "They are not to be," says the letter preserved in the Mantuan archives, "of majolica, but will be made of a lighter substance, more elegant and delicate in appearance; the white body will be entirely decorated in white upon white."



From this vague description we may at least infer that the pieces were not to be of lustred ware (as was probably the broken dish, the term majolica being then exclusively reserved to the Majorcan importations). But we are at a loss to imagine what sort of white ware could have been made sufficiently attractive by an exclusive application of a white-upon-white decoration. Could it be that one of the Ferrarese potters was already on the track of the discovery of the translucent porcelain which was successfully produced under the Duke Alfonso I. some years afterwards? Howbeit, all considerations of the inexplicable passage leave us under the impression that the pottery in question was not of the regular order.

During the reign of Alfonso I. war was raging in the Duchy. The victorious armies of Pope Julius II. and of the King of Spain had taken possession of the towns of Modena and Reggio. In 1510, all financial resources being exhausted, the Duke had to pledge with the Jews not only his plate, but also the jewels of his wife, Lucrezia Borgia. Whether the laboratory and kilns were kept going at the Castle during that troubled interval cannot be ascertained. It is recorded, however, that the majolica of the Duke's own make was taken to replace the golden vessels that had gone from the dresser. On the other hand, one may contend that, in 1520, no artistic pottery was made at Ferrara, since Duke Alfonso entrusted Titian with superintending the making of a set of drug-jars for the pharmacy of the Palace, as we have recorded in the article on Venice. The commission would not have gone abroad if the Duke had had, at that moment, a sufficient number of potters in his employment. It is, however, difficult to reconcile such a state of things with some extracts of the expenses-book of the ducal household for the year 1522. They show that money was spent for the purchase of lead and tin, and that the potter Antonio, from Faenza, received a monthly salary of twelve lire, "with board and lodging for two persons," also that some *boccalari* were engaged to assist him, and that one *Camillo* received twelve soldi for painting vases "for the potter." This implies, at any rate, a serious resumption of



the work. Antonio left the Duke's service in 1528, and was succeeded by one Catto, who died in 1535. The brothers Dossi, painters and modellers permanently engaged to complete the internal decoration of the Palace, were occasionally asked to supply the workshop with sketches for the painting of vases, and models for handles and other applied parts.

More complication is thrown into the study of Ferrarese ceramics by the fact that, according to unequivocal records, an independent *atelier*, started and supported by the munificence of the Duke's brother, Sigismondo d'Este, and managed by Biagio Biassini, of Faenza, was at work in the Palace of Schifanoia from 1515 to 1524. The names of *Il Frate*, *pittore alla majolica*, Grosso and Taffarino, likewise majolica painters, appear in connection with this establishment.

Nothing worth recording occurred at the main factory until the arrival from Urbino of the two brothers Camillo and Battista. This Camillo da Urbino should not be mistaken for his homonym Camillo Fontana, the brother of Orazio. The first-named one is said to have invented the first porcelain ever made in Europe. This point rests only on the authority of contemporary writers, for no example of his work in that direction has ever been discovered. He died in 1567, refusing to divulge his secret. The other Camillo, also called da Urbino, who worked at Florence under the protection of the Grand Duke Francesco di Medici, lived until 1589.

From what we have just heard, it follows that pottery, majolica, and porcelain have all been manufactured at Ferrara; the fact is fully attested by undeniable texts. Yet, if the final settlement of the point depended on the production of authenticated specimens, it is to be feared that the sceptic unbeliever might think he had the best of the argument. So far, not a piece, not a fragment, exists in any collection on which the speculative label "*Ferrara*" could be affixed with the certainty that its accuracy might not be impugned.

Some majolica services, bearing the arms of the ducal family, are sometimes hinted at as possible productions of the Ferrara kilns. Thus, we have the Gonzaga Este set, ordered

by Isabella d'Este about 1520, and the one made in 1579 on the occasion of the marriage of Alfonso II. with Margarita di Gonzaga. The first of these services is rightly considered as having been made by Nicola da Urbino in the *Fontana bottega*; the date inscribed on the other service precludes the possibility of its being the work of the potters at the Castle; no traces are left in the ducal archives that any of them were employed in the place after the death of Camillo in 1567.

As matters stand at the present day, the Ferrara majolica is for us dead and gone. To bring it back to life again can only be the outcome of some fortunate discovery scarcely to be expected. If this ever happens, it will be, for the rediscovered ware, almost like a second birth. We shall then willingly discard that portion of our imperfect opinions and be happy to welcome as majolica of Ferrara many specimens long familiar to us under other names.

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#### ESTE

So cheap and common was the pottery made in Italy in ancient times that it was hardly worth the cost of transport from one district to another. Consequently, as common earthen vessels were in general use, the supply for the local demand was usually manufactured on the spot. This may account for the fact that heaps of fragments, often of very early date, are found in places which never became centres of artistic production. Este is no exception to this rule; nothing among the fragments disinterred from the soil of the town or in its vicinity discloses any improvement of manufacture during the course of three centuries.

In the year 1765, Gio. Battista Brunello decided to endow his native town with an important majolica factory. His first



step was to entice into his service some of the best artists and operatives from the works of Antonibon, then in full activity at Nove. This gave rise to costly litigation between the two manufacturers, which interfered not a little with the success of the enterprise. At this juncture, a Frenchman, G. P. Varion by name, who also came from Nove, arrived with the intention of starting, at Este, the manufacture of porcelain, of which he had mastered the secret. This scheme was successfully carried out in association with one Giovanni Franchini. Shortly afterwards, Varion separated from his partner and attempted the manufacture of earthenware after the English fashion. At his death his widow took the management of the business, and brought Antonio Costa, likewise from Nove, into partnership. The factory of G. Franchini was the only one to outlive the minor undertakings which were started at intervals of a few years. The works were considerably enlarged in 1782, and received certain privileges in 1785. A radiated circle, accompanied with the word ESTE and the initials G.F., was the mark adopted by Franchini. The establishment has continued to prosper up to the present day.

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#### PARMA

What has just been said in the foregoing notice concerning the fragments of ancient pottery discovered at Este, and other places which were never to make a mark in ceramic history, might be repeated in reference to Parma. Makers of *scodelli* and *boccali* have been noted in the civic registers since the year 1410. Of their work we cannot form any idea.

One G. B. Serullo, of Genoa, was commissioned by the Duke of Parma, in 1582, to paint some sets of tiles for the decoration of the Palace. Various sums of money were paid to him between 1582 and 1594 to assist his attempt to establish



the manufacture of majolica in the town. Whether he succeeded in his undertaking appears doubtful, as we hear nothing more about him.

Similar attempts made at a later date were equally unfortunate. In 1759, Carlier, a Frenchman, obtained a privilege for the making of ornamental pottery; in the next year the privilege was transferred to Nicola Piacentini, who gave up business in 1782.

### MODENA

All that is known about the factories of Northern Italy, consisting almost exclusively of vague historical information unsupported by the recovery of any objective evidence, is only of secondary importance to the ceramic collector. A bare list of pot-makers, in chronological order, might be produced in many cases, but, as far as we may surmise, none of these places ever boasted of having possessed a talented artist, or of having inaugurated any special style of production. Modena is, in this way, sadly devoid of interest. Piccolpasso includes the town among those where majolica manufacture was carried on in his time. The names of local craftsmen appear in connection with the history of the various factories in which they found employment. Thus we have seen that the first majolists working at Ferrara under the patronage of the Duke had come from Modena. From that town also came Geminiano Gozi, who, in 1765, was successfully manufacturing porcelain at Venice.

The majolica of Modena is not represented in our collections by any authenticated example.

### SASSUOLO

We are told that in the small town of Sassuolo, situated not far distant from Modena, the pottery trade was a thriving one in the sixteenth century. In 1576 the name of a *Massaro dei boccalari* appears in the civic registers. In the next century,

Professors T. Ferrarini and A. Carandino were managing an important *scodelleria*. Majolica was not, however, produced before 1741. In that year, Gio. Andrea Ferrari set up a manufactory of enamelled pottery, a staff of operatives having been brought from Imola. An exclusive privilege was granted to him, and a general prohibition of all importations protected his trade from foreign competition. He was succeeded in 1756 by G. M. Dallari, who made bold to introduce the manufacture of "*fina majolica*," that is to say, English earthenware. Such great expectations were raised on the prospects of the scheme that the duration of Ferrari's privilege was extended, in favour of Dallari's family, to three generations. Pietro Lei, of Sassuolo, was selected in 1765 as one of the artists on whom depended a successful revival of majolica painting at Pesaro. Imitation of the white and blue Oriental porcelain was then the prevailing style; what he and his mates did at that moment can hardly be distinguished from the work done everywhere else in the same direction.

The original factory is still carried on by the Rubbiani brothers. An illustrated catalogue of the sale of their collection, which comprised ancient and modern specimens, was published in Rome in 1893, with an historical introduction by F. Argnani. It describes sundry examples of *sgraffito* ware of the fifteenth century, attributed to the Sassuolo potters. A few of these ancient pieces were obtained from the ducal palace, an occasional residence of the Este family.

## REGGIO

A complaint addressed, in 1556, to the Duke Alfonso II by the *boccalari* of Reggio, regarding the injury done to their trade by the importation of foreign wares, has revealed the existence of some pot-works in the town. Further information is, however, still wanting.



## SAN POSSIDONIO

In defiance of the privilege enjoyed by the Sassuolo factory, Marquis Achille Taccoli resolved to try the manufacture of a superior kind of pottery in his own villa of San Possidonio towards 1755. His assistants were Carlo, of Cremona, G. Benassi, of Modena, and P. Costoli, of Padua. One year had scarcely elapsed when the works were closed and the products destroyed by order of the authorities. Another attempt subsequently made by the Marquis was attended by the same result.

## MANTUA

When Marchese Lodovico IV. was ruling at Mantua (1444-78) the craft of the pot-makers received its governing statutes. Schivenoglia, a contemporary chronicler, mentions a *bottega de Maioli* that was then kept in the town by one Zonan Antonio, *Majolaro* (Majolicaro ?). The man may have been simply a dealer in foreign wares ; everything tends to show that majolica was not manufactured in Mantua at this early date. In fact, when Isabella d'Este wished to obtain services of painted pottery, they had to be ordered for her in Pesaro, Faenza, Venice, and Ferrara.

A fruitless attempt to establish the art for the benefit of the ducal Court was made in 1526 by Frederigo Gonzaga. Steps were taken to induce one Alberto Catani, a potter from Lodi, to come and settle at the villa of Marmiolo, where he was to make majolica and porcelain (?) exclusively for the Duke. Catani declined to accept the proposals, but offered to supply, from his own works, as much porcelain as should be wanted for the use of the palaces.

All ornamental wares continued to be purchased abroad. When the term of the edict of 1537, which permitted the free introduction of foreign goods into the town, was on the point of expiring, in 1542, the pottery dealers, representing the miserable quality of all the local products, claimed and obtained a confirmation of the decree for a longer period.



Of a privileged factory known to have been patronised by Duke Ercole, we know little beyond the statement that the course of its existence was sadly hampered by financial difficulties. Giulio Romano was asked to supply special designs to be reproduced on the ware; some writers go so far as to say that a few of them were painted by his own hand. Campori attributes to this period the beautiful dishes and vases mentioned in the inventory of Duke Charles II., drawn up in 1665.

Majolica manufacture was resumed at the Castle under Duke Vincenzo I. Some talented hands came from Albissola in 1591, and continued at work, painting fine vessels for the Court, until 1630.

Independently of this essentially private *atelier*, in 1616 the Duke Ferdinando encouraged and supported a company, formed for three years between G. Casale and S. Tamburino, having for its object the making of majolica for the use of the public. The premises, the house and the ovens, and the necessary stock of raw materials, were supplied by the Duke. In 1617, the year after the foundation of the works, a decree was enacted which forbade the introduction of all kinds of foreign wares; a measure which had to be repealed in 1621. The enterprise having by that time come to an end, one Lazza Levi was granted permission to open a new majolica factory. We do not know what became of this last scheme.

A crucible over the flames, in which gold ingots are melting—the emblem adopted by Frederigo Gonzaga after the victory of Taro—is considered by Campori as the mark of the Mantua majolica. We must add that, unfortunately, the mark is as difficult to find as the ware itself.

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## VII

### LOMBARDY—PIEDMONT

MILAN—LODI—PAVIA—TURIN—VINOVO—MONDOVI

#### MILAN

THE Milanese province, in which building-stone is not easily obtainable, was a mighty centre of brick and terra-cotta-making; during Renaissance times it abounded with burning kilns unceasingly fed by innumerable gangs of clay-toilers. From a general point of view, the region and its particular trade should occupy an important place in ceramic history, yet it sinks into insignificance with regard to its production of ornamental wares. The traveller admires the friezes, roundels, and bas-reliefs inserted in the walls of the cathedrals and palaces, the statues and wonderful terra-cotta groups which adorn Varallo and other sanctuaries, but he notices that everywhere they have retained their brick-coloured surface, unless they are painted over with odious distemper colours. In no case was it thought expedient to enhance their decorative effect by enamelling the plastic work in the style of the Della Robbia. The whole course of the sixteenth century has not, as far as we know, left us a single example of majolica of Milanese origin.

Curiously enough, the earliest document that has been found having reference to majolica manufacture is a memorial, addressed in 1594 to the city magistrates, in the name of the *Università dei Bottegarii dei Vasi da prida*, asking that the privilege requested by two potters of the names of Prandoni and Mantica for establishing a majolica factory



should not be granted, as it would prove prejudicial to the whole trade. If these *bottegarii* were, as we think probable, the incorporated store-keepers of the town, we can understand that the granting of a manufacturer's privilege, which would carry with it the interdiction of the sale of foreign pottery, would be detrimental to their interests; yet, in the same year (1594), a privilege with restricted rights was accorded to one Gio. Pietro Leyna, Milanese, who claimed to be the inventor of a ware decorated with various colours, gold and silver, "and of other novelties of no less importance." The duration of the ten years' term of protection he asked for was, however, reduced to six years. Leyna may not have taken advantage of the favour bestowed upon him, for no factory of that name is known to have ever been in operation.

Not before 1745 do we hear of artistic majolica being manufactured at Milan in an establishment of some importance. One Felice Clerici had started it in good earnest, and he meant to give it a rapid and serious development, if we may judge from the number of artists and operatives he employed from the outset. The name of Clerici is celebrated in the annals of the ceramic art. Antoine Clerici was "*ouvrier du Roi en terre sigillée*" at Paris in 1612. Another A. Clerici was working at Marseilles in 1697. Pierre Clerici founded the Moustiers factory in 1686, and he was succeeded by his son Pierre Clerici II. in 1728. The degree of relationship which united the French and the Italian branches of the family has never been ascertained. From 1746 to 1772 special privileges, exemption from taxes, and an annual subsidy, were repeatedly granted to Felice Clerici, whose business seems to have been tolerably prosperous.

In 1762, Pasquale Rubati, one of Clerici's workmen, having erected, on his own account, a factory near Sant' Angelo, on the other side of the town, petitioned the Giunta to have the favours enjoyed by his former master extended to his enterprise. Two years later, P. Rubati, whose fabrication was then firmly established, protested before the commercial tribunal against the application made by two partners for



permission to build a majolica factory in close proximity to his own.

Carlo Rubati succeeded his father in 1796, taking one Emanuele Bonzanini into partnership. This factory, from which the best examples of Milanese majolica issued, was closed at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Genolini, to whose researches we owe the greater part of our information, has found, in the archives, mention of some majolica works belonging to Cesare Gonfalonieri in the quarter of Santa Cristina, which had already been in existence some seven years before 1784. The same author describes a painted and gilt soup-tureen bearing the mark "FABRICA DI SANTA CRISTINA."

The important manufactory started and developed in 1840 on the premises of the Tinelli Co., by the energetic efforts of Giulio Richard, is still prospering under the name of *Società Ceramica*.

An absolute want of originality—if not in the shapes, which sometimes err on the side of extravagance, at all events in the taste of the decoration—is noticeable in the ware made during the second half of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, this ware is generally commendable by the fine quality of the white enamel and the finish of the execution, which make all good specimens highly valued by the collector. The patterns are of two classes: either they affect the Japanese style, in white and blue designs, more often inspired from the Dutch *faïence* than from true Oriental examples; or else they reproduce the *rocaille* motives, the flowers, birds, and insects of the Dresden china, and in rarer instances the figure subjects of that of Capo di Monte. The palette of the ancient majolist is unknown to the Milanese painter; his underglaze colours are pale and dull. The "on-glaze" enamels, used in the imitations of porcelain painting, lack, likewise, vividness and brilliancy: to compensate for this, gilding is profusely introduced. The Milan ware is largely represented in the Italian collections. The pieces are generally marked with the full name or the initials of the manufacturer, often accompanied with the words "MILANO" or "MIL<sup>o</sup>."

## LODI

We have seen that Duke Frederigo Gonzaga sent to Lodi, in 1526, to engage an experienced potter capable of establishing at Mantua the manufacture of majolica and porcelain. One cannot endorse the inference drawn by certain writers from such an isolated occurrence that, at the time when the art was in the ascendant, the most talented majolists were to be found at Lodi. As a matter of fact, the potters of the town were not making then, and never did make, anything but common goods. In the sixteenth century the trade was represented by a single factory of an inferior order, that of the Cappullettis.

The municipal records, while giving us the names of several manufacturers, have also disclosed the unsettled position in which they stood. P. Giovanni Sordi was a maker of *stoviglie*, or common pottery, in 1625. In 1669 the brothers Manardi were leaving the town, to transport to Bassano the manufacture of majolica after the manner of Faenza and Lodi. Later on, in 1742, Dallari was giving up his share in the Sordi factory to settle at Modena; and at Pesaro, in 1763, we find A. Casali and A. Callegaro, both of Lodi, continuing the business of Bartolucci. The natural conclusion one must draw from the above list is that the potters of Lodi appear to have been happy to leave that place when they could find an opportunity.

A large vase, tastefully decorated in blue with Moustiers patterns, was exhibited at Rome in 1889. It was marked "S. F. LODI, G. GIACINTO ROSSETTIJ FECIT." This Rossetti was established in 1745. Many other names might be added to those already mentioned, but none of them could be connected with any work of artistic merit.

## PAVIA

Famous all over Italy were the potters and model-makers of Pavia for the plastic embellishments they had contributed, from immemorial times, to the completion of monumental



brick buildings. The earliest instances of the introduction of *bacili*, or discs of glazed clay, are found in the town, where we see them incorporated into the walls of churches erected during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There, also, the unknown modellers who, at the epoch of the Renaissance, covered with their admirable fictile reliefs the façades, the chapels, and the cloisters of La Certosa and other religious edifices, have shown what a degree of artistic richness can be attained by the well-considered employment of terra-cotta in architectural decoration. These are, of course, all works of the sculptor; the ceramic painter never thrived at Pavia.

One Giacomo da Sale is described in a document dated 1431 as *bochalarium papiensem*. He belonged, doubtless, to a guild of common potters. Only in 1596—for the first time—permission was granted to establish a majolica factory. G. di Zavatini, who obtained some privileges from the Commune at the same time, did not succeed in his enterprise, if he ever really established it. Another application to open a *fabbrica della maiolica faentina* was made by Antonio Dusi, of Bergamo, in 1609. No representative example from either of these undertakings has come down to us.

A curious group of pieces, to which three members of the Cuzio family have individually affixed their names, brings us more closely in touch with the kind of ware that was made at Pavia towards the end of the seventeenth century. Around them, C. Brambilla has seen fit to publish an elaborate monograph of the potter's art as practised in the town in both earlier and later days. The pieces themselves, obviously amateurish work, can hardly be taken as representing the average productions of the trade, neither do they come under the heading of "Majolica." Nevertheless they offer too much ceramic interest to be voluntarily ignored. The dishes made of red clay are "slipped" with a white wash into which the subject has been incised, after the manner called by Piccolpasso "*alla Castellana*." Ten signed specimens have been counted in various collections, and are described as follows:—



One dish, with ornamental patterns on the centre and the border, bears the mark "JOHANNES ANTONIVS BARNABAS CVTIVS PAPIÆNSIS. A.D. 1676"; one, with the subject of the Annunciation, is signed "JOHANNES BRITIVS CVTIVS CANONICVS ORDINARIVS. 1677." Both these are in the Pavia Museum.

In addition to these are eight more dishes inscribed: "PRESBITER ANTONIVS MARIA CVTIVS PROTHONOTARIVS APOSTOLICVS," in varied forms, and with dates ranging from 1677 to 1694. They are dispersed among the museums of Limoges, Milan, Pavia, the Louvre, the Cluny, and the Victoria and Albert. The subjects are all different; the specimen in the Victoria and Albert Museum is particularly interesting, as bearing in the centre the *graffito* portrait of an ecclesiastic, perhaps that of the worthy *Prothonotario* himself. The two last-named members of the Cuzio family declare themselves, on their work, as being in holy orders. It is not improbable that J. A. Barnabas was the potter who prepared the pieces and fired them after they had been decorated by the hands of the brothers.

The aspect of the Cuzio dishes differs slightly from that of the ordinary *graffito* ware: the rich lead glaze with which they are covered contained a small addition of manganese, so that, underneath it, the red clay ground has turned to a warm black, and the reserves of white clay are tinged with a purple-brown tint.

Many obscure pot-works are named by Brambilla; as none of them can be associated with the manufacture of artistic goods, it is scarcely necessary to reproduce the list. The perusal of it would offer no more interest than we might find in going over a trade directory.

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## TURIN

Somewhat dull and soon told is the history of majolica manufacture in Turin. A statement, advanced by the Italian writers, that a *fabbrica* was established there in 1564, under the auspices of Duke Emanuele Filiberto, is untenable, and must be dismissed. It had its source in two documents discovered by Campori. One of them has reference to a sum of Lire 600 paid to M<sup>o</sup>. Orazio Fontana and M<sup>o</sup>. Antonio da Urbino, being the price of two *credenze* of majolica made by command of the Duke. The other mentions the sum of Lire 60 paid to M<sup>o</sup>. Antonio as part of his expenses in accompanying the ware to France, where Emanuele Filiberto was then staying. In an accessory document, Orazio Fontana is qualified as "*Maestro de Vasari de S. Altezza.*" This must be taken as a mere honorary title, for not a tittle of evidence has been found to warrant a belief in the existence of a factory at that period, nor to show that Orazio Fontana ever went to Turin. One piece, a solitary one, testifies to the fact that work of an experimental character was attempted during the sixteenth century. It is a small basket with open-work sides, bearing the inscription: "FATA IN TORINO ADI. 12. D. SETEBRE 1577," now in the Civic Museum at Turin. No influence of the Urbinesque style can be traced to it, but it is not unlike the contemporary productions of northern Italy.

There also may be seen numerous witnesses to a series of attempts which, despite the actual support of the Dukes and the earnest efforts of skilled masters, never led to the permanent establishment of the ceramic industry. Some of these pieces bear the mark of their maker, and are, therefore, of local interest; but none of them could be commended for any artistic merit.

In 1646 a majolica factory was installed in a suburban locality, still called the Royal Park, by the Genoese Captain Bianchi, and subsidised by Carlo Emanuele. Three years afterwards, in 1649, the Duke entrusted the practical management of the works to one Nicola Corradi, from Albissola.



The fact that the premises and plant were let to Enrico La Riviera in 1657 seems to indicate that the original enterprise had not been a success.

We have a record of one Gian Antonio Guidobono, from Genoa, going to Turin with his two sons at this period. He painted there many majolica vessels for the Court. He died in 1685 at a very advanced age.

After this, a pitiful tale is unfolded of a succession of minor undertakings, which starting at first under ducal patronage, passed rapidly from hand to hand, finally coming to an untimely end. The cause of these repeated failures has been attributed to the bad quality of the raw materials obtainable in the region.

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#### VINOVO

Vinovo figures in our list on account of the ineffectual attempts said to have been made by the porcelain makers of the place to manufacture majolica. In 1776, G. V. Brodel, having obtained from the King special privileges, annual subsidies, and the free use of the royal castle of Vinovo, to assist him in his venture of making real porcelain, started operations under the practical direction of Pierre Paul Hannong, of Strasburg. From the outset all went from bad to worse, and Brodel was happy to withdraw from the concern, leaving Hannong in full possession. It was then that the latter tried to find salvation in the manufacture of majolica. One year had scarcely elapsed when the business had to go into liquidation. Dr. V. Amadeo Gioanetti stepped in, formed a company of wealthy shareholders, and in 1780 resumed the manufacture on safer lines. His hard porcelain commanded a steady success; he retained the management of the works until he died in 1814.



## MONDOVI

The majolica made at Mondovi during the seventeenth century, at a place called "*Il Piano della Vella*," is no more than a tradition. It is well to dismiss the commercial wares produced in 1808 by Francesco Perotti and Randazzo, in 1810 by Benedetto Musso, of Savona, and in 1834 by Giuseppe Bezio, with a mere mention.

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## VIII

### STATES OF GENOA

GENOA—ALBISSOLA—SAVONA

#### GENOA

INFORMATION is wanting concerning the approximate date at which the making of ornamental majolica was introduced in Genoa "*la superba*." One might assume, however, that by reason of its supremacy the Ligurian capital had been the centre from which the surrounding factories had originally taken, and long continued to take, inspiration. What we know for certain is, that its productions are now scarcely distinguishable from those of Albissola, Savona, and other kindred works. No early date has ever been found on any authenticated specimen associated with the name of Genoa. Yet, if we turn to Piccolpasso, our handy authority on such questions, we find that the Genoese potters were prosperous in his time, and even practised manufacturing ways of their own. For instance, they used the plastic clay extracted from the mine, instead of the muddy deposits of the rivers preferred in other localities. We also see sketches of the favourite patterns of the current ware which this old writer mentions as being produced at Venice also.

Remarkable panels of wall-tiles, rarely found anywhere else of such a superior order, are now our only testimony of the prevalence at one time, in the town of Genoa, of the manufacture of Italian majolica of the true classical style. The Botto chapel in the church of Santa Maria di Castello is decorated in this manner.

In the Vico San Matteo and the Via Luccoli, the balus-

trades and lower walls of the monumental staircases of two old palaces still preserve their original covering of majolica tiles. These are worth a short description. Although all the details of the patterns are in the pure *cinquecento* taste, the whole scheme is—through its geometrical disposition and arrangement of colours—highly suggestive of an Oriental carpet. No tile pavement in Italy can compare with it in character. The decorative effect has, in my estimation, never been surpassed, when applied to a similar purpose, by any work of the kind; not even in the case of the tile-clad walls of the Alhambra, the recollection of which it, indirectly, brings to our mind. All the colours of Faenza have been used for the painting, with the exception of the red, so rarely met with in the other contemporary works. H. Herdtle has given reproductions of several of the panels; they offer a great variety of compositions. It is to be regretted that the beautiful plates are not accompanied by an historical notice giving us the names of the palaces and the dates of their construction. The tiles may, however, be confidently attributed to the middle of the sixteenth century, for nothing in the design or in the technical treatment betrays the approach of the decadence of the art.

The names of a few majolists figure in the civic registers of that period, but it is not apparent whether the men were established masters, or simply painters belonging to other centres and temporarily residing in the town. This is the case with the following: Francesco da Pesaro, who died in 1529; Goracchi da Borgo San Sepolcro, described as a painter in 1556; Tomasso; Gio. Francesco; and Bartolomeo—all of Pesaro.

No traces are left of any important factory having been in activity in Genoa during the seventeenth century. The statement of Belgrano that at that time the town had two majolica factories, one at Capo di Faro and the other at Carignano, which had adopted for their mark a beacon and a sun respectively, had been proved by Vignola to be, if not quite erroneous, at all events somewhat incorrect, since these two



marks are now recognised as belonging to two manufacturers of Savona.

From Genoa a great trade in Italian enamelled ware was conducted with foreign countries. But the neighbouring factories of Albissola, Savona, and other places supplied the bulk of the exported goods; the town had no need of pottery-works within its walls.

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#### ALBISSOLA

Until the year 1533, when it was incorporated as an independent township, the village of Albissola was part of Savona. Nevertheless, it is better that the ceramic productions of the place should be treated separately. A local taste for the introduction of cornices, friezes, and columns of polychrome pottery in the structure of public and private buildings gave constant employment to the potters of the town. Showy panels of wall-tiles, painted with landscapes and figure subjects, were considered indispensable for the decoration of the entrance-halls of all houses having any pretensions to elegance. Numerous examples of the kind could still be seen in the region about one hundred years ago. Mostly of pretentious but unrefined aspect, these exceptional contrivances of the Albissola potter remained far inferior in merit to the wall-tiles of the Genoese palaces they attempted to imitate.

Alizeri considers as the earliest work that could be attributed to Albissola an altar-piece, coming from a private chapel, inscribed: "AVE MARIA. 1529." It is composed of majolica tiles painted in blue, yellow, and green with the Holy Virgin and Child, and the panel is set into a heavy architectonic frame. It measures 1m. 62c. by 1m. 29c. The name of the maker is unknown; it is supposed to have been painted by one of the itinerant majolists who carried their art from place to place.

The same author describes at length a tile panel of much

greater importance, removed from the sacristy of the parochial church of Albissola-à-Mare, on which is represented the subject of "The Nativity." It is inscribed "FATTA. IN. ARBISOLA DEL 1576. P. MANO. DI. A. GVSTINO. = GIRONIMO. VRBINATO LA DIPINSE." The picture reflects little credit on the painter or on the Urbino school; the drawing is hasty and rude, the colours are poor and look washed out. It is the beginning of the end. Nothing better than these decadent efforts was to be made in later times.

For a long time the locality had been renowned as a good training ground for potters and painters; from it, many other places drew a supply of skilled craftsmen. Thus, in 1591, we find Duke Vincenzo I. calling some "men of Albissola" to Mantua with a view of establishing the manufacture of majolica in his dominion. At Turin, in 1649, it is Nicola Conradi—a member of the potter's family who imported the faïence industry into Nevers in 1602—whom we see coming, also from Albissola, to manage the Bianchi factory, by order of Carlo Emanuele. And Luigi Levantino, a native of the same place, is recorded as having successfully manufactured majolica at Venice in 1670.

From suburban Albissola a soundly-established industry seems—but rather late—to have spread into the heart of Savona. Painted probably by the same hands, and having more a commercial than an artistic end in view, the wares of the three towns Genoa, Albissola, and Savona form a homogeneous group from which distinct individualities can scarcely be segregated. Some of the marks, we know, may be trusted to a certain extent; namely, the capital A, the crown, and the shield given to Albissola by Vignola. Yet we have to acknowledge that the pieces which bear these rather speculative marks are uncommonly like other pieces which show the marks assigned, on no better reasons, to the neighbouring factories.

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## SAVONA

In the monograph he gave us of his native town, Tomasso Torteroli, having proved to his and our own satisfaction that in the days of antiquity the Roman *figuli* had occupied an important settlement at Savona, applied himself to the task of drawing an imaginary picture of the advanced and prosperous condition in which the local pottery and majolica works stood during mediæval and early Renaissance times. This he has completely failed to establish, having not a shadow of evidence to produce in support of his allegations.

Strictly speaking, the Savona majolica has no historical existence before the middle of the seventeenth century. At that period written documents come to the assistance of the student, clear and precise enough to show us that we are no longer dealing with fiction. Extracts from official acts make us acquainted with the names of many majolists, some of them conducting thriving factories, others engaged in decorating the ware. The following belong to the earliest and best period of manufacture:—

Girolamo Salomini was flourishing about 1650; he marked his productions with the figure of Solomon's seal. At that time Gian Antonio Guidobono and his son Bartolomeo, both counted among the best majolica painters, had not yet left Savona for Turin. Domenico, the second son, was also a painter. The father's work is marked GAG.

Agostino Ratti, born in 1699, distinguished himself in painting humorous subjects. He died in 1775. His work is signed with his full name and the letter S.

Gian Tomasso Torteroli, an ancestor of the historian, was the last majolica painter in Savona. He worked chiefly for G. Boselli.

Among other names of manufacturers and painters of the second period we may quote: Chiodo, the Levantini, Rubatto, Pescetto—all of whom had adopted a distinctive mark—and Giacomo Rossetti. This Rossetti succeeded in developing an establishment of exceptional importance. He made lead-



glazed cream-coloured ware, after the new fashion, but he is said to have found it more profitable to buy English and French goods, which he decorated in the Italian taste and sold as his own manufacture. The factory was still at work during the first year of the nineteenth century.

The Savona majolica reached its finest form towards 1680. It lacked brilliancy of colour, but to make up for this shortcoming, extraordinary care was taken in the preparation of the materials and the fashioning of the ware. Tea- and coffee-services of that period are known which rival porcelain in lightness of make, whiteness of glaze, and sonority of substance. Vases, dishes, and baskets were, on the other hand, of extreme heaviness. This was partly due to their models being taken from pieces of hammered metal, the massive embossments of which they also produced. Still further to increase this affectation of plastic enrichment, garlands of fruits and flowers, grinning masks, figures of cupids, modelled in the round, were applied by hand to the form of the vases. The execrable taste of the rococo ornamentation applied to pottery seems to have originated in Venice, but it was certainly in Savona that it reached its most exaggerated expression. It kept clear, however, of any display of violent colours; all the best specimens are simply painted in blue. The polychrome ware appeared only towards the end; it shows little experience in the preparation of the metallic oxides, all the tints being pale and dingy.

The prominent majolists who condescended to accept occasional engagements to work in the *bottega* of one of the masters of Savona boasted of being particularly known as oil and fresco painters. Their dexterity in sketching a subject on a dish or a vase with a few bold strokes of the brush was sometimes nothing short of wonderful. They gloried in exaggerating, as they went on, the extravagances of a more and more perfunctory treatment—which had many admirers at the time—confident that in an unbounded facility of execution lay the supreme expression of talent.

In this flippant manner was painted many a popular scene,



**SAVONA.**

FIG. 48.—DISH WITH A BATTLE SUBJECT.

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





drinking bout, and coarse caricature, possibly much appreciated at that moment, but which now seem to us wanting as much in artistic merit as in ordinary good taste.

The days had gone by when noble majolica could still aspire to retain its place in the palaces of the great. It was gradually becoming the ware of the middle classes. As such it had to lower its former standard and accommodate itself to the moderate means and the arbitrary fancies of the people from whom alone it could expect patronage. Majolica was then cheap and showy in the Genoese States. Yet it was not a purely industrial production. There was in its very coarseness and imperfection a variety of result through which each piece received a certain stamp of individuality which we miss in the mechanical earthenware of our own time.

The output of so many factories, all making popular ware, must have been enormous. We cannot be surprised, however, if so few specimens of it have been spared to us. The painted service had penetrated into all the houses of the well-to-do families, but it was no longer purchased as an ornament to be arrayed on the dresser and treasured from father to son; it took its place among the articles of daily use which constantly ran the chance of coming to grief, and few if any of these services have escaped their doom.

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## IX

### NEAPOLITAN STATES

#### NAPLES—CASTELLI—MINOR FACTORIES

##### NAPLES

AT Naples, in the painted tiles of San Giovanni à Carbonari, we have found material illustration of the earliest practice of the art of the majolist in Italy; it is with an account of the degeneration of the robust style of true majolica into finicking imitations of porcelain painting—a conversion that originated in the Neapolitan States—that our review of a fascinating chapter in the history of ancient ceramics has to be brought to an end.

So general was the custom of covering the roofs and paving the floors of the houses with plainly coloured or richly painted tiles in the town of Naples ever since the mediæval era, that no doubt can be entertained as to these tiles being of local make, a few rare exceptions to the rule having, perhaps, to be admitted. The San Giovanni pavement certainly shows Oriental influence. But some of the Moorish craftsmen, long before settled in Sicily, may have come over to execute the work, or else it may have been made by Spanish potters, who owed their training to the Moors, called to Naples by some member of the reigning family of Aragon. Whoever they may have been, the skilled masters who are responsible for the earliest work were not long in forming a school of tile-makers which could satisfy with an adequate production the ever-increasing requirement.

A pavement in the Monastery of Dona Regina, containing



heraldic shields, namely, the coat of arms of a queen of the Anjou dynasty, and some profile busts of unknown personages; another in the Cathedral of Capua; and another again in the church of S. Angelo a Nilo, where it lies in front of the tomb of Cardinal Broncaccio, who died in 1428, are referred to as belonging to the fifteenth century. To the sixteenth are ascribed the pavements in San Pietro in Marjella, in San Giovanni alla Pietra Santa, and in Sant' Andrea delle Dame; this latter is now to be seen in the Museo Nazionale. If more examples of the kind cannot be added to this short list, it may be because they were so numerous at one time that no notice was taken of the disappearance even of the finest among them. Naples is, and has been, the home of tile-making. Its production of tiles since tiles were made, would, if piled up, make a fair-sized hill. Nowhere else have I seen, as one can see on the Neapolitan seashore, thick deposits of earthen quarries, thinned and rounded by the rolling of the waves, replacing for miles the pebbles and flint stones which one is accustomed to find on a sea beach. There lie the remains of the fictile work of many generations, a mass of fragments which might have yielded a wealth of artistic and historical documents, but is now no more than a meaningless accumulation of worn-out shards.

We are absolutely in the dark as to the conditions of the potter's art at Naples during the brilliant period when it was flourishing in other parts of Italy. The discussion raised by some writers on the ill-read inscriptions which would give 1568 as the date of the painting of three vases signed "*Paulus Francus Brandi Pix 68*," the style of which denotes indubitably the end of the seventeenth century, must be left aside as apparently devoid of real value. It is idle to generalise from the production of a few odd pieces of rather undetermined origin, and to accept them as establishing the existence of settled manufacture in a given place.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century public taste was getting tired of the vulgar subjects and the loose style of painting which had superseded, in the late factories, the



classical pictures and the traditional canons of the old majolist. The moment was favourable for the introduction of a change. When some of the Grues, a numerous family of potters from Castelli, came to try their fortune at Naples, the novelty of their work, and its delicacy of treatment, took the art-patrons by surprise. They were acclaimed as the regenerators of the art, and for a while it might have been said that painting on enamelled ware had taken a new lease of life. The next notice will deal more amply with the mannerism of the Grues, and we shall attempt a critical analysis of their talents. Of an itinerant disposition, they worked in various places. The time of their residence at Naples is, however, practically settled by the inscribed pieces that remain to us. Through their testimony we are enabled to state that Saverio Grue worked in the town in 1717, 1718, and 1749; Fra. Ant. Grue—of whose works many examples may be seen in the Museum of San Martino, at Naples—in 1722; and their pupil, Carlo Coccorrese, at different dates ranging from 1721 to 1749. It is probable that they were merely majolica painters, buying the ware, ready to be decorated, from the manufacturers of common goods.

King Charles III. established at Capo di Monte, in 1736, a royal factory, in which not only fine porcelain, but also majolica of an exceptionally gorgeous character was manufactured. A sacristy fountain, described by A. Jacquemart, adorned with birds, cherubs' heads, clouds, rocks, and shells, had all its plastic ornaments covered with heavy patches of gold and silver. Its mark, "CAPO DI MONTE MO<sup>lo</sup>," fixes an origin which otherwise it would be embarrassing to determine. Jugs and other domestic vessels, bearing the late mark of a crowned N, are in existence.

In 1760, Nicola Giustiniani, of Cerreto, put himself at the head of a spacious and well-equipped majolica works. He engaged German artists, among whom we find F. Müller, of Mannheim, who later on was engaged for several years at the Imperial factory of St. Petersburg, but eventually returned to Naples in 1781.

An anomalous grafting of a misinterpreted Greek and Roman style—brought into fashion by the discovery of ancient painted vases—upon the wild exuberance of Baroque ornament was taking place at that period. It resulted, if I may be allowed to say so, in the most ludicrous and deplorable taste of decoration which was ever allowed to prevail in any cultured country. The pottery was bound to reflect something of the æsthetic aberrations of which the furniture and other appointments of the royal palace of Capo di Monte offer such a preposterous display.

To the name of N. Giustiniani must be added, on the list of the minor establishments, mostly remaining in activity at the present day, those of Mollica, Delle Vecchio, Schioppa, and Cacciapuoti.

On the whole, Naples strikes the traveller as an unique centre of ceramic industry, where the making of a cheap and popular ware is briskly carried on, by a numerous class of modest but independent craftsmen, in many parts of the town. I remember a time when many striking semblances of the *bottega* of the old majolist could still be seen at work in some shabby workshop of the central quays or the suburban thoroughfares. In most of them the potter worked alone, or with the assistance of his wife or a couple of apprentices. Thus were made majolica tiles, showily decorated with a rude pattern in crude colours; as well as the stoves, the garden vases, and the capacious oil-jars indispensable to the country people, and which the foreigner could not make. In some workshops of a slightly higher order one could see the master and his helps busy, under a shed in the back yard, throwing the ware upon the wheel, or attending to the firing of the kiln, and in the fore-room a few "artists" engaged in painting avowed forgeries, either of Etruscan vases or of majolica ewers decorated in the manner of the last Patanazzis. Either kind of sham was readily patronised by the tourist who wanted, but could not afford, to buy a genuine old piece. What has become of the more or less deceitful copies thrown upon the market in un-numbered thousands by the Neapolitans and other



forgers of Italy? No collector confesses to having one in his possession. This leaves us a prey to unpleasant apprehensions as to the real origin of a few of our own trusted specimens.

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#### CASTELLI

Inexhaustible beds of excellent potter's clay, and the abundant supply of fuel to be obtained from the wooded slopes of the hills, caused the selection of Castelli as a permanent settlement of pot-makers. It is but a small village, situated at some distance from Aquila. We have it on the authority of Roman historians and mediæval chroniclers that from the locality called by the former the *Agro Atriano*, and by the latter *I Castelli della Valle Siciliana*, an important trade in pottery of local manufacture was for centuries uninterruptedly maintained with the commercial ports of the Mediterranean Sea. The result of judiciously and methodically conducted excavations could alone enlighten us as to the exact nature of the productions. Chance discoveries of fragments go far to prove that glazed ware was commonly made during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Bindi, in his work, "*Le Maioliche di Castelli*," speaks of two telling specimens which, if we can trust the description, would give us the earliest date so far recorded on painted pottery. One is a terra-cotta plaque with the arms of the village of Castagna modelled in relief and painted in colours. It had the inscription "*FREDERICVS SEBASTINI FIERI FECIT. 1368.*" The other, which bore an armorial shield and the words "*STEMMA LAVORATA IN FIGVLINA DI BARTOLOMEO DI MAESTRO GIOCONDO*," is said to have been placed by Roberto de Melatino, of Teramo, over the door of the house he built at Castelli in 1372. It must be noted, by



the bye, that the writer had not seen the plaques in question; neither have we. Before accepting his unsupported testimony we must bear in mind that it is possible to read half-obliterated figures as 1368 instead of 1568, which appears a more probable date. In the next case we cannot see why the Stemma might not have been inserted in the wall long after the building of the house.

Quoting from Polidoro, *De Artibus Frentanorum*, Bindi recalls the name and fame of one *Maestro Renzo Axanensis*, "*pictor of opifex fictilium non vulgaris*," who lived towards the end of the fifteenth century. He was, presumably, one of the earliest majolists; none of his work has ever been recognised.

Of more direct application to our knowledge of the quality of the ware of the time is a large tile for insertion in a wall, which has the name of the maker, "*FECIT HOC TITUS POMPEI*," and is dated 1516. It is now in the Industrial Art Museum at Rome.

We gather from definite sources that the Pompei family occupied a prominent position in the town. Tito Pompei was, as we have seen by the tile just mentioned, at work about 1515. Next comes Orazio Pompei. To him is confidently attributed the painting in majolica representing the Holy Virgin and Child, signed "*ORO*." This painting was found embedded in the wall of a house above the inscription "*HAEC EST DOMVS ORATHI FIGVLI, 1569*." On a tile pavement in the chapel of San Donato, near Castelli, the name can also be traced in the half-obliterated letters "*ORAT . . . PO . . . HOC . . .*" Curiously enough, other tiles are to be seen in the same pavement showing the names of half a dozen painters, probably assistants in the *bottega* of the master, for to their name each has added the words *pingebat* or *fecit*, with the dates 1615 and 1616. The knowledge that so many skilled hands were employed by one of the manufacturers helps us to form a fair idea of the importance of Castelli as a centre of ceramic industry.

The trade remained in the hands of a few old-established

families. That of the Grues was the most numerous and influential. By the talent and activity of some of the members of that family the majolica of Castelli was raised for a while to a pinnacle of unchallenged supremacy over all the other artistic potteries of Italy.

First on the roll is recorded the name of Francesco Grue, one of the local *vasaii*, about 1594.

His son, Carlo Antonio Grue, was to be the celebrated artist whose original style was imitated not simply by his near relatives but also by nearly all the painters of the Abruzzi school. This Carlo Antonio had four sons, likewise majolica painters, who all followed in their father's steps.

Francesco Antonio, who had been educated for the priesthood, decided to devote himself to pottery painting, and went to Urbino to learn the technics of the art. At Naples, where he intended to settle as a majolist, being implicated in some political riot, he was thrown into prison. When liberated, however, he put his scheme into execution; he established a kind of ceramic studio, and for ten years decorated ornamental ware with great success. He returned to Castelli in 1735, and died there in 1746.

Anastasio was noted as a landscape painter. He turned his attention to gilding on the enamelled ware; invented a new process, and practised it with great ability. Born in 1691, he died in 1734.

Amelio also painted landscape.

Liberio, born in 1701, distinguished himself in the painting of fancy heads and of historical subjects. He signed in full or with his initials. He died in 1776.

A son of Francesco Antonio, Francesco Saverio, born at Atri in 1730, trained as a majolist, developed some talent as a miniature portrait painter. As a modeller he has left some good biscuit groups and medallions. He obtained employment as head turner at the royal porcelain factory of Naples, and died in 1799.

Of the following members of the Grue family, also majolica painters at Castelli, little is known besides the name. They





**CASTELLI.**

FIG. 49.—COVERED CUP, SIGNED "LIBORIUS GRUE."

*Victoria and Albert Museum.*





are Tomasso, nicknamed "Lo Zumpo," Pier Valentino, Liberio (senior), and Bernardino.

Seven drug-pots, painted with biblical subjects and preserved in the pharmacy of the Hospital for Incurables, are signed *Lorenzo Sallandra, Pittore di Vasi di Creta*. It does not follow, however, that there existed a factory of that name.

A namesake of the Francesco Saverio Grue mentioned above has signed with that name several pieces, to which he has also affixed dates ranging from 1713 to 1735. He may be the same man who established some works in the Abruzzi, in the village of Bussi. He has left a panel of tiles painted with the life of San Francesco Xaviero, inscribed "FRANC. ANT. XAVERIVS GRUE, PHIL. ET THEOL. DOCTOR, INVENTOR ET PINXIT IN OPPIA BVXI. ANNO D. 1713."

Another family which has also furnished many potters and painters to Castelli, the Gentili, must not be forgotten. Bernardino Gentili the elder appears to have been a manufacturer; he died in 1683. His son, Carmine Gentili (1678-1763), was apprenticed to Carlo Antonio Grue; he painted religious and historical subjects in the manner of his master; he signed with the initials "C.G.P." Carmine Gentili had two sons, Giacomo (1717-1765) and Bernardino (1727-1813). Their work is sadly expressive of the utter decline of the art.

Many other names of artists more or less closely related to the leading families will be found in the exhaustive monographs of Rosa, Bonghi, and Olivieri.

Was it that the clannish spirit which animated the working part of the population of the outlandish village of Castelli would not suffer the intrusion into the local trade of any of the migratory craftsmen who, everywhere else, imported the ways and means of one centre into another? What is certain is that, as far as the artistic tendencies of the Castelli majolist were concerned, his style having been established, it was not to be affected by outside influences. The painter had no pretension at creating original designs; he was, if I may take

my simile from the musical glossary, a *virtuoso* and not a *maestro*. But when copying a well-known print he meant to give to it an interpretation of his own. In the conduct of his work all was obviously sacrificed to obtaining an harmonious blending of low-toned colours, a notion strikingly contrasting with that of the old masters who gloried in the brilliant and vigorous tonality of their ware. The eye is charmed by these sweet modulations in light blues and greys gently accentuated with soft purple; by the cloudy washes of pale yellows and greens; and by the touches of sandy gold which enlighten the whole work, imparting to it a discreet richness very far from tawdry vulgarity. Yet through these inherent qualities the Castelli majolica has fallen under the ban of criticism. They were obtained by the exclusion of some of the essential principles on which rests the true art of majolica painting. No heed is any longer taken in developing brilliancy of surface and deepness of tone. The painting had to be fired at a low heat, because all the elaborate finish would have been compromised if the enamelled ground had commenced to fuse. Hence the dull and shallow aspect of the painted decoration. Nor can the selection of the subjects favoured by the painter be always commended. The latest engravings after Pietro di Cortona, Tempesta, Salvator Rosa, and other masters who never troubled themselves about the possible application of their picturesque conceptions to majolica painting, were copied in preference. Such a picture, which looked so well on the easel, seems somewhat out of place when reproduced upon a vase. In the important matter of decorative effect the Castelli majolica is decidedly inferior to its predecessors.

The ware is well represented in the Museum of San Martino at Naples and other Italian collections, also at the Louvre and at the Cluny at Paris; it makes a poor show in the museums of England.



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## MINOR FACTORIES

THE following names have been selected by the monographists from the long list of the small provincial Neapolitan pot-works in which painted ware has been produced at one time or another:—

- 1421.—**ARIANO**, near Foggia.—Tradition has it that at that date Francesco Sforza attracted to the place a few potters from Faenza.
- 1713.—**BUSSI**, in the Abruzzi.—Franc. Ant. Saverio Grue started there a majolica works, apparently without success. A tile panel signed and dated by him has been previously described.
- 1730 (?).—**ATRI**.—The Aquavita, lords of Atri, gave their patronage to a factory established in the town by Aurelio and Liberio Grue. Liberio having quarrelled with his brother, left him and settled at Teramo, where he produced his best work. On the death of Aurelio, in 1743, the Atri works came to an end.
- 1750 (?).—**SAN APOLLINARI**.—A small factory of enamelled ware was conducted there by the monks of Monte Cassino.
- 1771.—**PESCOLANCIANO**, in the Abruzzi.—White enamelled ware and porcelain "biscuit" were manufactured by the Duke Pasquale Maria.
- 1780 (?).—**GERRETO**.—Certain pieces painted with arrangements of foliage and fruits are said to have been made in that place.
- 1785.—**TORRE DEI PASSERI**, in the Abruzzi.—A bottle painted with landscapes and inscribed "TURIS PASSERIS, A.D. 1785," bears witness to the existence of a factory of that name.

## MARKS

THE common mark that all operatives and artists working under one master are now wont to apply to the ware completed by their united efforts was not adopted as a rule in the *bottega* of the old majolist. The graphic sign found repeated upon sundry specimens is not always a certificate of their having a common origin. Far from it; the too often nameless artist who has made use of it to distinguish his personal work from that of his mates has sometimes transported it from place to place. He has sometimes added it to a mention of the town or factory in which he happened to work at the time. Occasionally two distinct marks are inscribed side by side on the same piece, and it is difficult to decide which is that of the man and that of the master. More confusion than real enlightenment is therefore likely to result from placing an implicit confidence in the evidence of a mark.

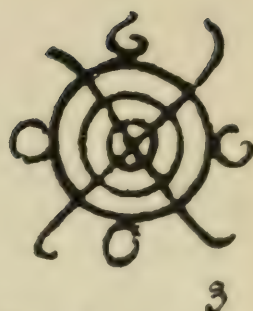
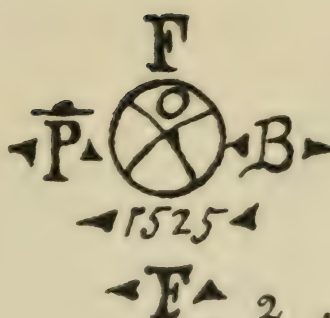
An examination of the copious handbooks in which these innumerable marks and monograms are partially recorded brings with it the conviction that, considering the state of uncertainty in which we stand with regard to their attribution, these marks are little more, after all, than materials towards the acquisition of a clearer insight into a branch of knowledge still imperfectly mastered. I may for that reason be excused if, refraining from reproducing in full the list given in volumes easily obtainable, I limit myself to a selection of such signs, monograms, and graphic figures as can afford precise indications respecting localities of origin, dates of manufacture, and names of makers and artists.



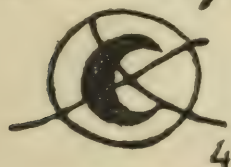
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FAENZA

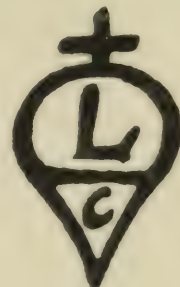
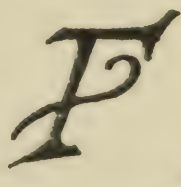
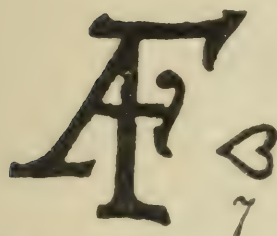


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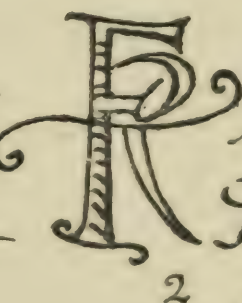
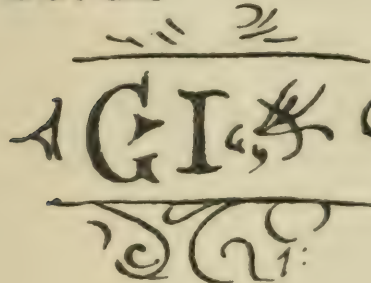


Baldasara  
manara

forli



FORLI



FAENZA.—(1) ON THE TILE PAVEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF S. SEBASTIANO AT VENICE, DATED 1510. (2, 3, 4) VARIETIES OF THE MARKS OF THE CASA PIROTTA. (5) FOUND ON THE FAENZA AND ALSO ON THE CAFAGGIOLO WARE. (6) BALDAZARA MANARA, THE ELDER. (7, 8, 9) UNIDENTIFIED MARKS.

FORLI.—(1) ON A PLATE OF THE BASILEWSKI COLLECTION. (2) ON A DISH IN THE V. AND A. MUSEUM. (3) ON A PLATE IN THE LOUVRE.

RAVENA

Rimini

RAVENA  
*1535  
 in bolega de mag  
 tro alisandro  
 in arimino*

CAFAGGIOLO

*in gaffagirolo*  
 S *1* *2* *3*  
 SIENA  
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 fata siena  
 da m benede  
 tto *2*  
 I.P. *1* F. I. *3*

RAVENA.—ON A PLATE OF THE DAVILIER COLLECTION.

RIMINI.—MARK OF JULIO DA URBINO; BOLOGNA MUSEUM.

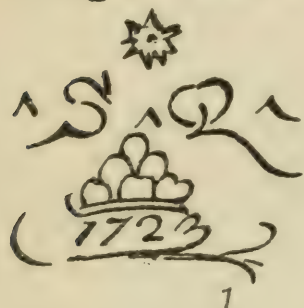
CAFAGGIOLO.—(1) ON A JUG OF THE FORTNUM COLLECTION. (2, 3, 4)  
 MARKS OF PIETRO AND STEPHANO DI PILIPO.

SIENA.—(1) JACOMO PINSUR (?). (2) MAESTRO BENEDITTO. (3) ON A PLATE  
 OF THE HENDERSON COLLECTION, B. M.



S. QUIRICO D'ORCIA

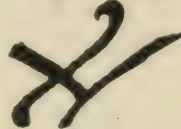
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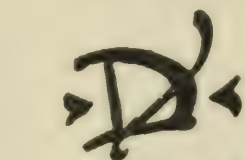
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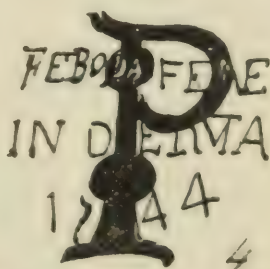
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S. QUIRICO D'ORCIA.—(1) ON A BASIN MADE FOR CARDINAL F. CHIGI, V. AND A. MUSEUM. (2) MARK OF BART. TERCHI.

FABRIANO.—ON A PLATE OF THE BASILEWSKI COLLECTION.

DERUTA.—(1) ON A VOTIVE PLAQUE, CASTELLANI COLLECTION. (2, 3, 4, 5) VARIOUS MARKS WITH THE NAME OF THE TOWN.

ROME.—ON A PLATE IN THE POSSESSION OF MISS LOCKWOOD. AT ROME.

# PESARO



PESARO.—(1) CLUNY MUSEUM. (2) CASTELLANI COLLECTION. (3) BRITISH MUSEUM.

GUBBIO.—(1) V. AND A. MUSEUM. (2) B. M. (3) CASTELLANI COLLECTION. (4, 5, 6, 7) MARK OF MAESTRO GIORGIO. (8, 9) SALIMBENE ANDREOLI (?). (10) MARK OF MAESTRO PRESTINO. (11) ON A PLATE DATED 1540. (12) M<sup>o</sup> GILLIO (?). (13) M<sup>o</sup> PRESTINO (?), PESARO MUSEUM.

# CASTEL DURANTE

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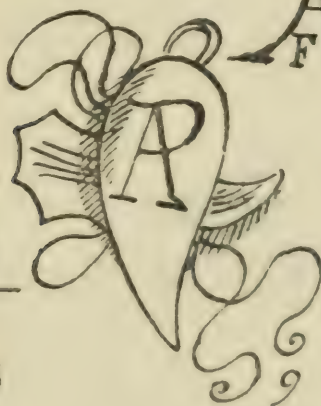
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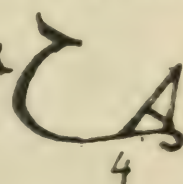
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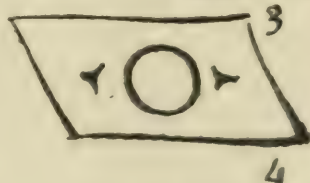
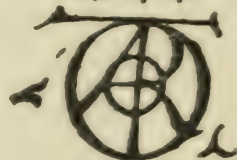
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CASTEL-DURANTE.-(1) ON A PLATE IN THE B. M. (2) CASTELLANI COLLECTION. (3) PESARO MUSEUM. (4) ON A DRUG-POT

URBINO.-(1) MARK OF NICOLA DA URBINO. (2) FLAMINIO FONTANA (?). (3, 4) ORAZIO FONTANA. (5, 7) FRANCESCO XANTO. (6) ON A PLATE IN THE D'AZEGLIO COLLECTION. (8) CAESARE CARI (?). (9) ALFONSO PATANAZZI. (10) FRANCESCO DURANTINO.



VENICE

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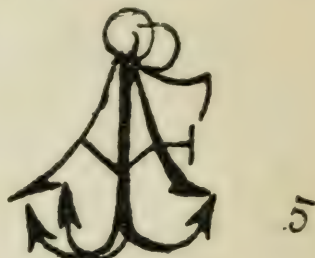


F. venitia: a S<sup>a</sup>  
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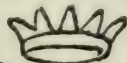
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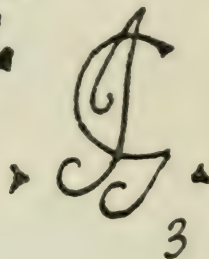
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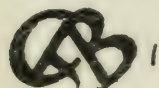



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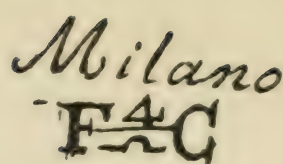
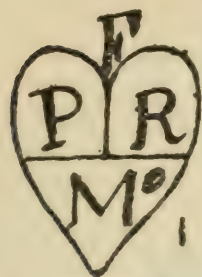
VENICE.—(1) MARK OF MAESTRO LODOWICO. (2) M<sup>o</sup> JACOMO DA PESARO.  
(3) ON A DISH V. AND A. MUSEUM. (4) DIANIGI MARINI, 1636.  
(5) ON A PLATE IN THE B. M.

PADUA.—(1) BARKER COLLECTION. (2) BRITISH MUSEUM.

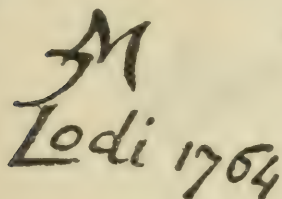
BASSANO.—(1) ON A GOAT-SHAPED INKSTAND (CASTELLANI COLLECTION).  
(2) MARK OF B. TERCHI. (3) PLATE (CORRER MUSEUM). (4) MARK  
OF MANARDI.

NOVE. (1, 2) MARKS OF G. B. ANTONIBON. (3) MARK OF G. BARONI.

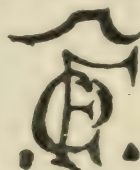
MILAN



LODI



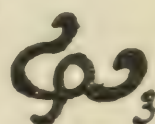
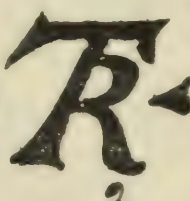
PAVIA



VINOVO

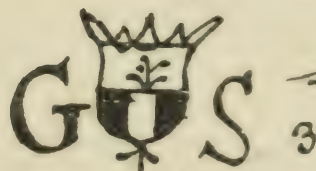
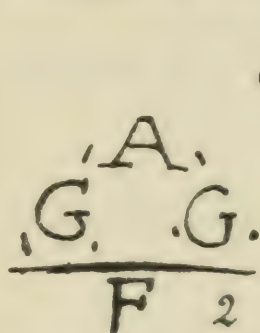


TURIN



ALBISSOLA

SAVONA



MILAN.—(1) MARK OF PASQUALE RUBATI. (2, 3) FELIX CLERICI.

LODI.—ON A PLATE FORMIRLY IN THE REYNOLDS COLLECTION.

PAVIA.—ON A PLATE IN THE BRAMBILLA COLLECTION.

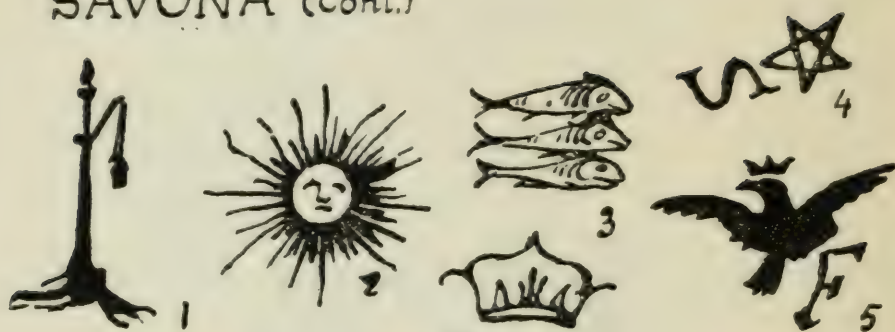
TURIN.—(1) ON A PLATE IN THE TURIN MUSEUM. (2) MARK OF ROSSETTI.  
(3) UNKNOWN MARK.

VINOVO.—VITTORIO AMADEO GIOANETTI.

ALBISSOLA.—UNCERTAIN MARK.

SAVONA.—(1) LI LEVANTINO. (2) STANFORTH'S COLLECTION. (3) GIROLAMO SALOMINI. (4) BART. GUIDOBONI.

SAVONA (Cont.)



NAPLES

B.G



CASTELLI

Liborius Gruë D.

BE

1757

Grue D



Gentile D.

C.A.G.pi. 4

SAVONA.—(1) LEVANTINO. (2) G. SALOMONI. (3) PES CETTI. (4) SICCARDI.  
(5) FOLIO.

NAPLES.—(1) FRAN. BRAND, 1654. (2) CARLO COCCORESE.

CASTELLI.—(1) LIBORIUS GRUE. (2) ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE GRUE  
FAMILY. (3) SAVERIO GRUE. (4) CARLANTONIO GRUE. (5, 6) BER-  
NARDINO GENTILE.



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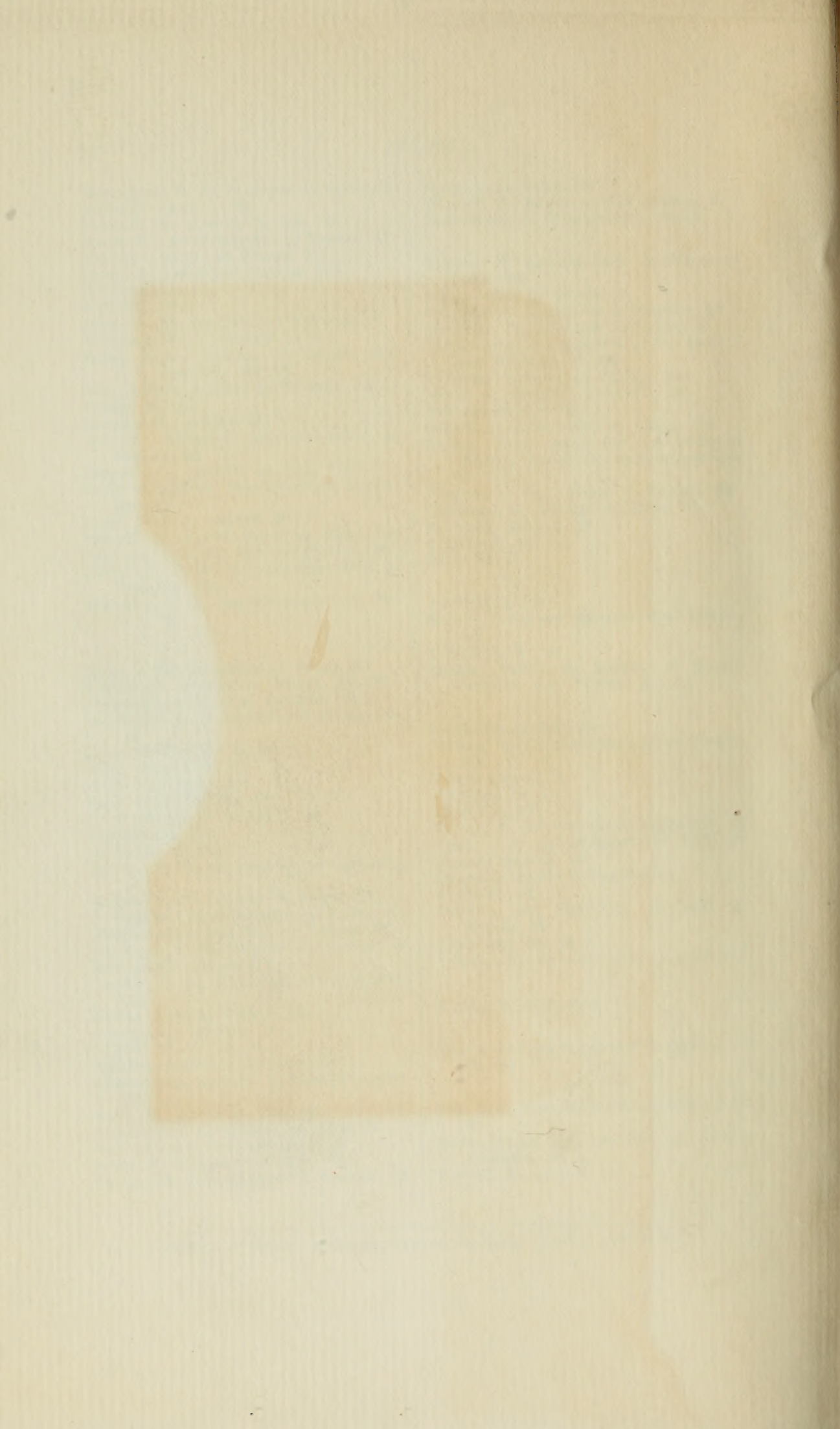
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